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THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF DR. RICHARD PRICE

1723-1791

SUBMITTED BY  
OLIVE KING BROOKS  
(A.B. RADCLIFFE 1928.)

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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## THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF DR. RICHARD PRICE

## CHAPTER I

If there is one period in the history of our country in which we are deeply interested, it is the period from 1770-1785, in which we became independent of Great Britain. Many people think that the whole English nation approved of the policy of the British crown toward the colonies. This was, of course, not true. A strong opposition flourished during this whole period, both in Parliament and throughout the country. (1). A study of one member of this group, Dr. Richard Price, - an outstanding member of the radical wing of the Whig party, and a well known Unitarian Minister - will give an idea of the sort of thinking that was prevalent among the opposition. On the question of the relation of America to the mother country Dr. Price was a whig of the most radical hue. The Whigs as the opposition party, were not of course in favour of the Government policy in regard to America. In 1760, the Rockingham ministry had repealed the Stamp Act, but had accompanied the repeal by a Declaratory Act asserting the right of the English government to tax the colonies as well as to legislate for them. Pitt (the elder) and Burke had agreed in supporting the repeal, but for different reasons. Pitt believed that Parliament had a right to impose duties on American trade for the purpose of regulating it, but that it had no right to levy internal taxes in the colonies. On the other hand, Burke held that America was not to be taxed, simply because it was not worth while irritating the colonists for the sake of any money that might be

1. Hinkhouse - The American Revolution as seen in the British Press.



## CHAPTER I

It there is one period in the history of our country in which we are deeply interested, it is the period from 1775-1783, in which we became independent of Great Britain. Many people think that the whole English nation approved of the policy of the British crown toward the colonies. This was, of course, not true. A strong opposition flourished during this whole period, both in Parliament and throughout the country. (1) A study of one member of this group, Dr. Richard Price, - an outstanding member of the radical wing of the Whig party, and a well known Unitarian Minister - will give an idea of the sort of thinking that was prevalent among the opposition. On the question of the relation of America to the mother country Dr. Price was a kind of the most radical man. The Whigs as the opposition party, were not of course in favor of the Government policy in regard to America. In 1763, the Rockingham ministry had repealed the Stamp Act, but had not accompanied the repeal by a Declaratory Act asserting the right of the English Government to tax the colonies as well as to legislate for them. Pitt (the elder) and Burke had agreed in supporting the repeal, but for different reasons. Pitt believed that Parliament had a right to impose duties on American trade for the purpose of regulating it, but that it had no right to levy internal taxes in the colonies. On the other hand, Burke held that America was not to be taxed, simply because it was not worth while irritating the colonists for the sake of any money that might be



obtained from them. The Whigs had stood also for another kind of liberty - Chatham, Grenville and the Rockingham Whigs had supported the "Wilkes, and Liberty" cry of 1769-1770. After 1770, the continued resistance of America to the taxes imposed by Parliament, shown by the Boston Tea Party (1773), the united help given by the other colonies to Massachusetts, on the passing by Parliament of the Boston Port Act, and the Massachusetts Government Act (1774), the meeting of the first Continental Congress (1774) and the fighting at Lexington (1775), brought the question of the policy towards America to an acute stage. In America, there were in circulation three theories in regard to American dependance on Britain. The first theory was that England was the mistress of all the dominions and Parliament supreme over the colonies and had power to legislate for them, but that Parliament was limited by an unwritten constitution and that under this it could regulate the external affairs of the colonies, but not the internal. (This was a belief held by the adherents to mercantilism: that colonial trade existed for the benefit of the mother country.) This theory Pitt had held in 1760. The second group of theorists accepted Parliament, but would give the colonists seats in Parliament. They had in mind the existing relations between England and Scotland. This group was represented by such an outstanding American as Benjamin Franklin. The third group, represented by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, believed that the empire should be a commonwealth of nations, with a common executive, but with each colony enjoying legislative independence. This is the ideal that was finally adopted in the nineteenth century. At this period the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands were in this relation



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to England. (1). In England, most of the Liberals belonged to the first group. Burke advocated a policy of conciliation towards America, a return to the laxness of the former policy towards the colonies with regulation of her trade only. Charles James Fox believed about the same. Dean Tucker in 1776, courageously suggested that the mother country frankly admit that the problem was insoluble, and concede virtual independence to the colonies. As for Dr. Price he encouraged the Americans in their resistance. This is amply illustrated in a letter which he wrote to a colonist, Charles Chauncy, February 25, 1775. He writes, "Neither my sentiments nor those of persons of more weight can be of much importance to you. It is from themselves that our brethren in America must look for deliverance. They have in my opinion infinitely the advantage in this dispute. If they continue firm and unanimous it must be a happy issue, nothing being more certain than that the consequences of the present coercive measures must in a year or two be so felt in this kingdom as to rout the present despotic ministry, and to bring in new men who will establish the rights and liberties of the colonies on a plan of equity, dignity and permanence. In such circumstances, if the Americans relax or suffer themselves to be intimidated or divided, they will indeed deserve to be slaves. For my own part, were I in America I would go barefoot. I would cover myself with skins and endure any inconveniences sooner than give up the vast stake now depending; and I should be encouraged in this by knowing that my difficulties would be temporary, and that I was engaged in a last struggle for liberty which perseverance would certainly crown with success. I speak with earnestness, because

1. Adams, R.G. - Political Theories in the American Revolution.  
pp.15-18.



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thoroughly convinced that the authority claimed by this country over the colonies is a despotism which would leave them none of the rights of freemen; and because also I consider America as a future asylum for the friends of liberty here, which it would be a dreadful calamity to lose."(1). A couple of months later (May 1775) in writing to Josiah Quincy Jr., he said; "Our rulers trust in their power to corrupt, divide, and intimidate. They believe that either the Americans will not fight, or that if they should, they are a mere rabble who will be easily subdued by a disciplined army. The ministry have taken their measure under this persuasion, and the officers in the army now going to America have in general no other apprehension and therefore go with good spirits, and in full expectation that all will be soon over."(2).

## CHAPTER II

At this juncture (1776) Dr. Price began to attract much attention by his writings in political economy. Hitherto he had confined his writings to mathematical problems, and to problems of philosophy. In his moral philosophy he was a decided advocate of the doctrine of "free will" and of the "unity and immateriality of the human soul." (3). This belief in the doctrine of "free will" probably forms the basis of his political philosophy in which field he was a wholehearted disciple of John Locke "taking as postulates the master's assumptions respecting the rights of the individual, and the origin, nature and purpose of government. Believing that the public debt

1. "Letters to and from Richard Price 1767-1790" p.20.
2. "Letters to and from Richard Price 1767-1790" p.28.
3. Social England - p.327.  
Stoughton - History of Religion in England. Vol.6. p.310.



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1. "Letters to and from Richard Price 1757-1790" p. 23.  
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 3. "Social England - 1757-1790"  
 Boston - History of Religion in England. Vol. 5. p. 210.



of Great Britain, then about 140,000,000 pounds, was an evil threatening the most serious consequences and that the attempt to coerce the colonies would, if persisted in, prove financially disastrous, and also thoroughly convinced of the justice of the American cause, Price sought to arouse British opinion in favor of pacification with America."(1).

In 1776 he published his theories in regard to America in a pamphlet entitled "Observations on Civil Liberty and the Justice and Policy of the War with America." Several thousand copies of this work were sold in a few days, and a cheap edition was soon printed and sold to the number of 60,000 copies. It was also translated into German and French and reprinted in America.(2). He devoted the first part of the pamphlet to a discussion of civil liberty which he defines as follows:- "Civil Liberty is the power of a Civil Society or State to govern itself by its own discretion; or by laws of its own making without being subject to any foreign discretion or to the impositions of any extraneous will or power."(3). He points out that there is one general idea that runs through the different kinds of liberty (physical, moral, religious and civil), that is, the idea of self direction or self government. "As far as in any instance the operation of any cause comes in to restrain the power of Self-government, so far Slavery is introduced." (4). Then turning to civil government he gives his idea of a perfectly free state:- "All civil government as far as it can be denominated free

1. Schuyler, B.L. - "The Rise of Anti-Imperialism in England." Political Science Quarterly. xxxvii.p.457.
2. It was printed in Boston by Gowars and Willes, and T. and J. Fleet. It went through eleven editions here and in London.
3. Price, R. - "Observations on Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America." p.3.
4. Price, R.- "Observations on Civil Liberty, etc." p.5.



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is the creature of the people. It originates with them. It is conducted under their direction, and has in view nothing but their happiness. All its different forms are no more than so many different modes in which they chuse to direct their affairs and to secure the quiet enjoyment of their rights. In every free state every man is his own Legislator. - All taxes are free gifts for public services. - All laws are particular provisions or regulations established by common consent for gaining protection and safety. - And all magistrates are Trustees or Deputies for carrying these regulations into execution. Liberty, therefore, is too imperfectly defined when it is said to be 'a Government by Laws, and not by Men.' If the laws are made by one man, or a junto of men in a state and not by common consent, a government by them does not differ from Slavery. In this case it would be a contradiction in terms to say that the state governs itself." (1). From this he decides that liberty in its most perfect state can only exist in a small state where each person can give his opinion and be drafted on for office. However there are methods by which an approach to perfect liberty may be reached in a large state. Representatives may be appointed and entrusted with powers of legislation. "In this method a free government may be established in the largest state and it is conceivable that, by regulations of this kind, any number of states might be subjected to a scheme of government that would exclude the desolations of war, and produce universal peace and order.

"Let us think here of what may be practicable in this way with respect to Europe in particular. - While it continues divided as it is, at present, into a great number of independent kingdoms whose



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1. Police - "Observations on Civil Liberty, etc." - pp. 6-7.



interests are continually clashing, it is impossible but that disputes will often arise which must end in war and carnage. It would be no remedy to this evil to make one of these states supreme over the rest and to give it an absolute plenitude of power to superintend and controul them. This would be to subject all the states to the arbitrary discretion of one, and to establish an ignominious slavery not possible to be long endured. It would therefore, be a remedy worse than the disease; nor is it possible it should be approved by any mind that has not lost every idea of civil Liberty. On the contrary,- Let every State, with respect to all its internal concerns, be continued independent of all the rest; and let a general confederacy be formed by the appointment of a Senate consisting of Representatives from all the different states. Let this Senate possess the power of managing all the common concerns of the united states, and of judging and deciding between them as a common Arbitor or Umpire, in all disputes; having, at the same time, under its direction the common force of the states to support its decisions. In these circumstances each separate state would be secure against the interference of foreign power in its private concerns, and therefore, would possess Liberty and at the same time it would be secure against all oppression and insult from every neighboring state. Thus might the scattered force and abilities of a whole continent be gathered into one point, all litigations settled as they rose; universal peace preserved, and nation prevented from any more lifting up of sword against nation."(1).

After this interesting little illustration which savors of our own league of nations scheme, Dr. Price continues by declaring that



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only if the representatives hold office for short terms, and only if they are chosen by the "unbiased voices" of a majority of the state, and are subject to the elector's instructions, will liberty be enjoyed at its fullest. Also in addition to a popular assembly he believed in an hereditary council and a supreme executive magistrate at the head of it all. As long as the lower house represents the people fairly and has a veto on all public measures along with the sole power of imposing taxes and originating bills for supplies, the hereditary chamber will act only as a healthy check and will not interfere with the liberty enjoyed. Then he gives his theory of government. "Of such Liberty as I have now described it is impossible that there should be an excess. Government is an institution for the benefit of the people governed which they have power to model as they please and to say that they can have too much of this power is to say, that there ought to be a power in the state superior to that which gives it being and from which all jurisdiction in it is derived."(1). Government ought never to interfere with private liberty unless the exercise of this liberty encroaches on the liberties of others. Price objects to the phrase "the omnipotence of Parliament" saying "Government is in the very nature of it a Trust, and all its powers a Delegation for gaining particular ends. This trust may be misapplied and abused. It may be employed to defeat the very ends for which it was instituted and to subvert the very rights which it ought to protect. .... A Parliament, for instance, consisting of a body of representatives chosen for a limited period to make laws, and to grant money for public services, would forfeit its authority by making itself perpetual or even prolonging its own



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duration, by nominating its own members, by accepting bribes, or subjecting itself to any kind of foreign influence. This would convert a Parliament into a conclave or junto of self-created tools; and a state that has lost its regard to its own rights so far as to submit to such a breach of trust in its rulers is enslaved. Nothing therefore, can be more absurd than the doctrine which some have taught with respect to the omnipotence of parliaments. They possess no power beyond the limits of the trust for the execution of which they were formed. If they contradict this trust, they betray their constituents, and dissolve themselves. All delegated power must be subordinate and limited. If omnipotence can, with any sense, be ascribed to a legislature, it must be lodged where all legislative authority originates; that is, in the People. For their sakes government is instituted and theirs is the only real omnipotence."(1). Price bewails the fact that Britain once believed in this ideal of civil liberty but of late had lost it. This loss is exemplified by her policy of legislation for another community which is not given an adequate representation in the portion of the government which frames the legislation. This policy of legislative supremacy over another country (America, of course) is to him a great sin against liberty, for he believes that a state is free only when it is governed by its own will. In answer to the question "Are there not causes by which one state may acquire a rightful authority over another tho' not consolidated by an adequate Representation" (2), he says no. The authority derived from conquest is never right because it is always founded on violence. "The Roman Republic was nothing but a faction against the general liberties of the world,

1. Price - On Civil Liberty - pp.15-16.

2. Price - On Civil Liberty- p. 24.



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and had no more right to give law to the Provinces subject to it, than thieves have to the property they seize, or to the houses into which they break. Even in the case of a just war undertaken by one people to defend itself against the oppression of another people, conquest gives only a right to an indemnification for the injury which occasioned the war and a reasonable security against future injury."(1). Also compacts or cessions are not valid reasons for one states' exercising authority over another. "This is a case in which compacts are not binding. Civil Liberty is, in this respect, on the same footing with Religious Liberty. As no people can lawfully surrender their Religious Liberty by giving up their right of judging for themselves in religion or by allowing any human beings to prescribe to them what faith they shall embrace, or what mode of worship they shall practice; so neither can any civil societies lawfully surrender their Civil Liberty by giving up to any extraneous jurisdiction their power of legislating for themselves and disposing their property. Such a cession being inconsistent with the inalienable rights of human nature would either not bind at all or bind only the individuals who made it. This is a blessing which no one generation of men can give up for another and which, when lost, a people have always a right to resume. Had our ancestors in this country been so mad as to have subjected themselves to any foreign community we could not have been under any obligation to continue in such a state, and all the nations now in the world who, in consequence of the tameness and folly of their predecessors, are subject to arbitrary power, have a right to emancipate themselves as soon as they can."(2). As long as neither conquest nor compact

1. Price - On Civil Liberty. pp. 24-25.

2. Price - On Civil Liberty. pp. 25-26.



and had no more right to give law to the Province subject to it, than thieves have to the property they seize, or to the houses into which they break. Even in the case of a just war undertaken by one people to defend itself against the aggression of another people, conquest gives only a right to an indemnification for the injury which occasioned the war and a reasonable security against future injury. (1) Also conquests or seizures are not valid reasons for one state's exercising authority over another. "This is a case in which conquests are not binding. Civil liberty is, in this respect, on the same footing with religious liberty. As no people can lawfully surrender their religious liberty by giving up their right of judging for themselves in religion or by allowing any human beings to prescribe to them what faith they shall embrace, or what mode of worship they shall practice; so neither can any civil societies lawfully surrender their civil liberty by giving up to any extraneous jurisdiction their power of legislating for themselves and disposing their property. Such a cession being inconsistent with the inalienable rights of human nature would either not bind at all or bind only the individuals who made it. This is a blessing which no one generation of men can give to another and which, when lost, a people have always a right to resume. But our ancestors in this country seem as well as to have subjected themselves to any foreign dominion we could not have been under any obligation to continue in such a state, and all the nations now in the world who, in consequence of the weakness and folly of their predecessors, are subjected to arbitrary power, have a right to emancipate themselves as soon as they can." (2) As long as neither conquest nor compact



can give such an authority, neither can the third and last of Dr. Price's causes, that is, any favors received or services performed by one state for another. "Let the favour received be what it will, Liberty is too dear a price for it.... How much has been done by this kingdom for Hanover? But no one will say that on this account, we have a right to make the laws of Hanover, or even to draw a single penny from it without its own consent." (1). The only way that the parts of an empire can be free, according to Dr. Price, is for the supreme power to exist nowhere except in a congress of representatives from each part, and for the authority of this Senate to be limited to affairs common to the whole empire, for if one of the states of the empire is free, "but governs by its will all the other states, then is the Empire.... an Empire consisting of one state free, and the rest in slavery. Nor does it make any more difference in this case that the governing state is itself free than it does in the case of a kingdom subject to a despot, that this despot is himself free." (2).

After this essay on his beliefs on Civil Liberty which classed him among the radicals of his day, Dr. Price continues his pamphlet with his ideas about the "Justice and Policy of the War with America." First he discusses the justice of the war. It had been argued that the war, the object of which was to maintain the legislative power of Parliament over the colonies, was justified because it was necessary to maintain the unity of the empire. This Dr. Price scoffs at. He says, "The truth is, that a common relation to one supreme executive head, an exchange of kind offices, ties of interest and

1. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 26.

2. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 29.



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affection, and compacts, are sufficient to give the British Empire all the unity that is necessary. But if not - If, in order to preserve its unity one half of it must be enslaved to the other half, let it, in the name of God, want unity."(1). Another reason that people had brought forth to justify supremacy over the colonies was that Britain was the parent state. This reason also Price refutes:- "The English came from Germany. Does that give the German states a right to tax us? .... Supposing .. that the order of nature in establishing the relation between parents and children ought to have been the rule of our conduct to the colonies, we should have been gradually relaxing our authority as they grew up. Instead, like parents, we have done the contrary."(2). "'But we have, it is said, protected them, and run deeply in debt on their account'... Will any one say that all we have done for them has not been more on our own account than on theirs? But suppose the contrary. Have they done nothing for us? Have they made no compensation for the protection they have received? Have they not helped us to pay our taxes, to support our poor, and to bear the burthen of our debts, by taking from us at our own price, all the commodities with which we can supply them? .... Has not their exclusive trade with us been for many years one of the chief sources of our national wealth and power? In all our wars have they not fought by our side and contributed much to our success?"(3). A further argument used was that the land they settled belonged to England. Dr. Price says that if the land had any owners, they were the natives and that the colonists had bought most of the land from them, and had cleared

1. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 36.
2. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 37.
3. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 38.



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and cultivated it without any outside help. Besides they settled by right of charters that granted them all the rights of Englishmen. Another strange reason that Dr. Price had heard, was that England submitted to a parliament which did not truly represent them, so why should not the colonists? But, says Dr. Price, the degree of representation that England does enjoy makes it liable to taxation by Parliament, but since the colonists enjoy absolutely no representation, they are not liable. "On how different a footing the Colonies are with respect to our government, from particular bodies of men within the kingdom who happen not to be represented! Here it is impossible that the represented part should subject the unrepresented part to arbitrary power, without including themselves. But in the Colonies it is not impossible. We know that it has been done."(1).

As a second point, Dr. Price says that the war with America is not justified by the Constitution. The principle on which English government is founded, he says, is "The right of a people to give and grant their own money."(2). The principles of the Constitution do not give this right to the people of England alone and deny it to the colonists.

Next Dr. Price discusses the policy of the war. He opens the subject by saying, "The object of this war has been often enough declared to be 'maintaining the supremacy of this country over the colonies'. .... I would observe that this supremacy is to be maintained, either merely for its own sake, or for the sake of some public interest connected with it and dependent upon it. If for

1. Price - On Civil Liberty. pp. 47-48.

2. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 49.



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its own sake, the only object of the war is the extension of dominion, and its only motive is the lust of power."(1). He gives two reasons for his belief that the war is a contest for power only. First, the love of power for its own sake, which is inherent in human nature; second, that the ministers had frequently declared that their aim was not to draw revenue from America. The policy towards America will not be of any advantage to her. "By an armed force we are now endeavouring to destroy the laws and governments of America and yet I have heard it said, that we are endeavouring to support law and government there. We are insisting upon our right to leavy contributions upon them, and to maintain this right, we are bringing upon them all the miseries a people can endure, and yet it is asserted that we mean nothing but their security and happiness."(2). Also the policy of the war is not favorable to England. After explaining about the paper currency which was so freely used Dr. Price writes (3), "Among the causes that may produce a failure of paper-credit there are two which the present quarrel with America calls upon us particularly to consider. The first is, 'an unfavourable balance of trade'. This, in proportion to the degree in which it takes place, must turn the course of foreign exchange against us; raise the price of bullion and carry off our specie. ... The second event, ruinous to our paper circulation, which may arise from our rupture with America, is a deficiency in the revenue. As a failure of our paper would destroy the revenue, so a failure of the revenue, or any considerable diminution of it, would destroy our paper."(4).

1. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 51.
2. Price - On Civil Liberty. p. 57.
3. Adam Smith did not agree with Price and called him "a most superficial philosopher, and by no means an able calculator." Rae-Adam Smith. p. 400.
4. Price - On Civil Liberty. pp. 80-84.



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Dr. Price ends his discussion of the policy of the war with this condemnation of it:- "The money drawn every year from the public by the taxes, falls but little short of a sum equal to the whole specie of the kingdom, and that, notwithstanding the late increase in the productiveness of the taxes, the whole surplus of the national income has not exceeded 320,000 l. per ann. This is a surplus so inconsiderable as to be scarcely sufficient to guard against the deficiencies arising from the common fluctuations of foreign trade, and of home consumption. It is nothing when considered as the only fund we have for paying off a debt of nearly 140 millions(1) Had we continued in a state of profound peace, it could not have admitted of any diminution. What then must follow, when one of the most profitable branches of our trade is destroyed, when a third of the Empire is lost, when an addition of many millions is made to the public debt, and when, at the same time, perhaps, some millions are taken away from the revenue?- I shudder at this prospect - a kingdom on an edge so perilous should think of nothing but a retreat."(2).

In writing on the "Honour of the Nation as affected by the War with America," Dr. Price finds three reasons for declaring that the war is a blot on the honor of England. First, because it is inconsistent with English sympathies in similar cases and with English practice in the past. (When England fought for Liberty, not against it). Second, because of the disgraceful talk which led to it - the colonists being represented as cowards, who would submit at the least suggestion of force. Third, because of the way in which the war is being conducted - by hired German troops, and by instigating

1. Trevelyan - "George III and Charles James Fox" - p. 321.  
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2. Price.- On Civil Liberty. pp. 86-87.



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the Indians and slaves to fight against the colonists.

In concluding his pamphlet, Dr. Price gives his remedy for the danger threatened by the war with America. It is Lord Shelburne's plan which was introduced into the House of Lords. Dr. Price reports the speech in the following words. "Meet the Colonies on their own ground, in the last petition from the Congress to the king. The surest, as well as the most dignified mode of proceeding from this country. - Suspend all hostilities. - Repeal the acts which immediately distress America, namely, the last restraining act, - the charter act, - the act for the more impartial administration of justice, - and the Quebec act, - all the other acts (the custom house act, the post office act, etc.) leave to a temperate revisal. There will be found much matter which both countries may wish repealed. Some which can never be given up, the principle being that regulation of trade for the common good of the Empire, which forms our Palladium. Other matter which is fair subject of mutual accommodation. - Prescribe the most explicit acknowledgment of your right of regulating commerce in its most extensive sense; if the petition and other public acts of the Colonies have not already, by their declarations and acknowledgments, left it upon a sufficiently secure foundation. Besides the power of regulating the general commerce of the Empire, something further might be expected, provided a due and tender regard were had to the means and abilities of the several provinces, as well as to those fundamental, unalienable rights of Englishmen, which no father can surrender on the part of his son, no representative on the part of his elector, no generation on the part of the succeeding one; the right of judging not only of the mode of raising, but the quantum, and the appropriation of such aids as



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they shall grant. To be more explicit, the debt of England, without entering into invidious distinctions how it came to be contracted, might be acknowledged the debt of every individual part of the whole Empire, Asia, as well as America, included. Provided that full security were held forth to them, that such free aids, together with the Sinking Fund (Great Britain contributing her superior share) should not be left as the privy purse of the minister, but be unalienably appropriated to the original intention of that fund, the discharge of the debt, - and that by an honest application of the whole fund, the taxes might in time be lessened, and the price of our manufactures consequently reduced so that every contributory part might feel the returning benefit - always supposing the laws of trade duly observed and enforced.

The time was, I am confident - and perhaps is, when these points might be obtained upon the easy, the constitutional, and, therefore, the indispensable terms of an exemption from parliamentary taxation, and an admission of the sacredness of their charters; instead of sacrificing their good humour, their affection, their effectual aids, and the act of Navigation itself, (which you are now in the direct road to do) for a commercial quit-rent or a barren metaphysical chimaera. How long these ends may continue attainable, no man can tell. But if no words are to be relied on except such as make against the Colonies - If nothing is acceptable, except what is attainable by force; it only remains to apply what has been so often remarked of unhappy periods, - Quos deus vult, etc." (1).



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## CHAPTER III

While this pamphlet met with some people's approval, it of course brought him much abuse. Among his critics were Dr. Markham, archbishop of York, John Wesley and Edmund Burke. However, in recognition of his services for liberty, he was presented with the freedom of the city of London. Also, the United States through their ambassadors in France sent him this invitation;

Passy, near Paris  
Dec.7,1778

"Sir,

By one of the latest ships from America we had the pleasure of receiving from Congress an attested copy of their resolution of the sixth of October in these words:-

In Congress, 6th. of October 1778

Resolved (1)

That the Honourable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esqrs. or any one of them, be directed forthwith to apply to Dr. Price, and inform him that it is the desire of Congress to consider him as a citizen of the United States, and to receive his assistance in regulating their finances. That if he shall think it expedient to remove with his family to America and afford such assistance, a generous provision shall be made for requiting his services.

Extract from the Minutes,  
Charles Thompson, Secy.

From a great respect to the character of Dr. Price, we have much satisfaction in communicating this resolution. We request your answer, sir, as soon as may be convenient. If it should be in



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the affirmative you may depend upon us to discharge the expense of your journey and voyage, and for every assistance in our power to make your passage agreeable, as well as your reception and accommodation in our country. We have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and respect, sir,

Your most obedient  
and humble servants.

B. Franklin  
Arthur Lee  
Dr. Price. John Adams (1)

Dr. Price replied to the invitation of Congress in a letter of refusal.

"Dr. Price returns his best thanks to the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, for conveying to him the resolution of Congress of the 6th. of October last, by which he is invited to become a member of the United States, and to give his assistance in regulating their finances. It is not possible for him to express the sense he has of the honor which this resolution does him, and the satisfaction with which he reflects on the favorable opinion of him which has occasioned it. But he knows himself not to be sufficiently qualified for giving such assistance and he is so connected in this country, and also advancing so fast in the evening of life, that he cannot think of a removal. He requests the favor of the Honorable Commissioners to transmit this reply to Congress with assurance that Dr. Price feels the warmest gratitude for the notice taken of him, and that he looks to the American States as now the hope and likely soon to become the refuge of mankind.

London, Jan.18,1779."(2).

1. Morgan - Memoir. pp.75-77. Also, The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the U.S. Wharton edition. Vol.2. p. 756.
2. Franklin, B.- Works.Vol.8.Footnote. p.355. Also, The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the U.S. Wharton ed. Vol.2. p.474.



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Your most obedient  
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of mankind.

London, Jan. 15, 1773. (2)  
J. Wilson - Memoirs, p. 75-77. Also, The Revolutionary Epoch  
Correspondence of the U.S. Boston edition, Vol. 1.  
p. 155.  
B. Franklin, B. - Memoirs, Vol. 5, Footnote, p. 355. Also, The Revolutionary  
Epoch, Correspondence of the U.S. Boston ed.  
Vol. 1, p. 155.



In a less formal letter to his friend, Arthur Lee, Dr. Price mentions his reasons for declining the invitation of Congress.

"Newington-Green, Jan. 18, 1779.

Dear Sir: Your most kind and excellent letter, together with the letter conveying the resolution of Congress, has made the deepest impression on my mind. I entreat you to accept yourself and to deliver to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams my best acknowledgements. Though I cannot hesitate about the reply addressed to the honorable commissioners and through them to Congress, which accompanies this letter, yet so flattering a testimony of the regard of an assembly which I consider as the most respectable and important in the world can not but give me the highest pleasure, and I shall always reckon it among the first honors of my life.

There is an indolence growing upon me as I grow older which will probably prevent me forever from undertaking any public employment. When I am in my study and among my books and have nothing to encumber me I am happy but so weak are my spirits, that the smallest hurry and even consciousness of having anything to do which must be done will sometimes distress and overpower me. What I have written on the subject of finances has been chiefly an amusement which I had pursued at my leisure, with some hope indeed, but very little expectation of its being useful. Nothing can be more melancholy than to see so many great European states depressed and crippled by having debts which have been the growth of ages and which in the end must ruin them, but which a small appropriation faithfully applied might have always kept within the bounds of safety. This is particularly true of this country. Here our debts must soon



in a less formal letter to his friends, Arthur Lee, Dr. Price  
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 "Newington-Gravel, Jan. 18, 1772."

Dear Sir: Your most kind and excellent letter, together with the  
 letter conveying the resolution of Congress, has made the deepest  
 impression on my mind. I entreat you to accept yourself and to  
 deliver to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams my best acknowledgments.  
 Though I cannot hesitate about the reply addressed to the honorable  
 commissioners and through them to Congress, which accompanies this  
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produce a shocking catastrophe. The new world will, I hope, take warning and profit by the follies, corruptions, and miseries of the old.

"My pamphlets on the principles of government and the American War were extorted from me by my judgment and my feelings. They have brought upon me a great deal of abuse but abundant amends have been made me by the approbation of many of the best men here and abroad, and particularly by that vote of Congress, to which I suppose they have contributed. When you write to any of the members of the Assembly, be so good as to represent me as a zealous friend to liberty, who is anxiously attentive to the great struggle in which they are engaged, and who wishes earnestly for the sake of the world that British America may preserve its liberty, set an example of moderation and magnanimity, and establish such forms of government as may render it an asylum for the virtuous and oppressed in other countries.

"Tell Dr. Franklin that he is one of the friends in whom, while in this country, I always delighted, and for whom I must ever retain the greatest esteem and affection. We are now separated from one another, never probably to meet again on this side the grave. My connections and state of health and spirits are such that I must stay in this country and wait its fate. I do this with a painful concern for the infatuation that has brought it into its present danger, but at the same time with indifference as far as my own personal interest is concerned, and a perfect complacency in the consciousness of having endeavored to act the part of a good citizen and to serve the best of all causes. Will you further mention me

pp. 37-39. Boston Edition.  
S. Franklin, D. - Works. Vol. 8. pp. 171-173. Sparks Edition.



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particularly to Mr. Adams and inform him that I greatly respect his character.

"Some good friends of yours and mine are well but I differ from them at present in opinion.

"Under a grateful sense of your friendship and with regard and wishes of all possible happiness

I am, dear sir, etc.,  
Richard Price." (1).

Besides the approbation of the United States Congress, some of the opposition in England seized upon the words of Dr. Price on Civil Liberty as expressing their opinions. In a letter from Dr. Priestley to Franklin dated Feb.13,1776 this is shown:-

"By the same hand you will receive a most excellent pamphlet by Dr. Price, which if anything can, will, I hope, make some impression upon this infatuated nation. An edition of a thousand copies has been nearly sold in two days, - but when Lord George Germaine is at the head of affairs it cannot be expected that anything like reason or moderation should be attended to. Everything breathes rancor and desperation and nothing but absolute impotence will stop their proceedings. We therefore look upon a final separation from you as a certain and speedy event. If anything can unite us, it must be the immediate adopting of the measures proposed by Lord Shelburne and mentioned in Dr. Price's pamphlet." (2).

The pamphlet on Civil Liberty brought about a correspondence between Dr. Price and Turgot. They agreed in their opinions on civil and religious liberty, but they disagreed greatly in their expectations

1. "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the U.S." pp. 27-28. Wharton Edition.
2. Franklin, B. - Works. Vol.8. pp. 171-172. Sparkes Edition.



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1. "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the U.S."  
pp. 37-38. Wharton Edition.  
2. Franklin, R. - Works, Vol. 8, pp. 171-172. Sparks Edition.



as to the effects of the American Revolution. In a letter to Turgot Dr. Price says - "Happy is it for the subjects of the wretched and corrupt governments of Europe, that there is an asylum now opened for them in America. This has a tendency to soften the despotisms of Europe and by operating in this way and calling the attention of men to the principles of civil authority, our quarrel with America is likely to do the greatest service to mankind. I look indeed to the new world with satisfaction and triumph and the time probably will come when a great part of Europe will be flocking to a country where, unmolested by spiritual and civil tyranny, they will be able to enjoy in safety the exercise of reason and the rights of men." (1).

M. Turgot, not so optimistic, writes in reply, - "Je ne vous parle plus des Américains; car quelque soit le denouement de cette guerre, j'ai un peu perdu l'espérance de voir sur la terre une nation vraiment libre et vivant sans guerre. Ce spectacle est réservé à des siècle bien éloignés." (2).

#### CHAPTER IV

In a letter to John Winthrop, June 1777, Dr. Price says, "Having done the little in my power, I am now in the situation of a silent spectator waiting, with inexpressible anxiety, the issue of a most important struggle." (3). In this period of waiting he published the correspondence which had been going on for some time between himself and Dr. Priestley, one of his most intimate friends. This correspondence dealt with their differences in opinion on the subjects of materialism and necessity. Both the gentlemen were very liberal

1. Morgan - Memoirs. p. 73.

2. Morgan, Wm. - Memoir. p. 74.

3. Letters to and from Dr. Price. p. 52.



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clergy, and would today be called Unitarians. However, Price's opinions were rather Arian than Socinian (the opinion of Dr. Priestley's and of other Unitarians.) Also in this period of waiting, he published (1779) an "Essay on the Population of England from the Revolution to the Present Time." By the statistics he used, he clearly proved a decrease of one quarter in the number of inhabitants in the period dealt with. However his conclusions were incorrect because of the inaccuracy of some of the statistics he used. (There were five times as many paupers as he had thought.)

Because of the success of the Colonists and the French in the war, North had to resign and George III had to place the opposition in office. Rockingham became Prime Minister, but the two most important members of the administration were Fox and Shelburne, the leader of the Whigs who had followed Chatham. This ministry opened negotiations for peace. Because of Rockingham's death in July 1782, Shelburne became Prime Minister. "In the King's speech, which was delivered at the opening of the session in Dec. 1782, that part of it which expresses a wish 'that such regulations may be established, such savings made and future loans so constructed as to promote the means of the gradual redemption by a fixed course of payment', was suggested, according to Dr. Price's nephew, and inserted in the very words of Dr. Price." (1). Indeed, Shelburne offered Price the position as his private secretary, but Price refused.

1. Morgan - Memoir. p. 98.

1. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. pp. 3-4.  
2. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. p. 10.



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## CHAPTER V

During Shelburne's ministry, which ended Feb. 1783, the peace treaty was signed. This occasioned the writing of a pamphlet termed "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World." This Dr. Price, the author, distributed in the United States at his own expense, in the hopes that it would help them to secure those liberties for which they had fought. He gives his view of the importance of the revolution in the following words. "Perhaps I do not go too far when I say, that, next to the introduction of Christianity among mankind, the American revolution may prove the most important step in the progressive course of human improvement. It is an event which may produce a general diffusion of the principles of humanity and become the means of setting free mankind from the shackles of superstition and tyranny." (1). He first advises the new country to adopt his scheme of a Sinking Fund for the payment of their debts. Then he advises also that the powers of Congress be enlarged. "In particular, a power must be given to collect, on certain emergencies, the force of the confederacy, and to employ it in carrying its decisions into execution." (2). Also "Congress must be trusted with a power of procuring supplies for defraying the expences of the confederation, of contracting debts, and providing funds for discharging them, and this power must not be capable of being defeated by the opposition of any minority in the States. In short the credit of the United States, their strength, their respectableness abroad, their liberty at home, and even their existence, depend on the

1. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. pp.3-4.
2. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. p.10.



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1. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. p. 3-4.  
2. Price - On the Importance of the American Revolution. p. 10.



preservation of a firm political union, and such an union cannot be preserved without giving all possible weight and energy to the authority of that delegation which constitutes the union." (1).

The next point he urges is the establishment of perfect religious freedom, the avoidance of an established church, and the continuance of freedom of speech and of the press. He disapproved of the religious tests for office holders in several of the states (Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, etc.), saying, "It is an observation no less just than common, that such tests exclude only honest men. The dishonest never scruple them." (2). In their system of education, he urges them to remember that the business of education "should be, to teach how to think, rather than what to think." (3). He warns the new states against the unequal distribution of property, the granting of hereditary honors and titles of nobility, the right of primogeniture, the too eager pursuit of foreign trade, with its accompanying evils - banks and the multiplication of paper money. Also against slavery, he says, "The emancipation of the Negroes must I suppose, be left in some measure to the effect of time and of manners. But nothing can excuse the United States if it is not done with as much effect as their particular circumstances and situation will allow. I rejoice that on this occasion I can recommend to them the example of my own country. In Britain, a negro becomes a free-man the moment he sets his foot on British ground." (4).

This pamphlet of advice was well thought of in the United States. Franklin wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, "Dr. Price's pamphlet of advice

1. Price - On Importance of American Revolution. p.11.
2. Price - On Importance of American Revolution. p.28.
3. Price - On Importance of American Revolution. p.29.
4. Price - On Importance of American Revolution. p.47.



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to America is a good one, and will do good." (1). The following letter from Thomas Jefferson to Price was also occasioned by approbation of the pamphlet.

Paris, Feb.1,1785.

"Sir,- The copy of your Observations on the American Revolution which you were so kind as to direct to me came duly to hand. .... I have read it with very great pleasure, as have done many others to whom I have communicated it. The spirit which it breathes is as affectionate as the observations are themselves wise and just.... The want of power in the federal head was early perceived, and foreseen to be the flaw in our constitution which might endanger its destruction. I have the pleasure to inform you that when I left America in July the people were becoming universally sensible of this, and a spirit to enlarge the powers of Congress was becoming general.... The happiness of governments like ours, wherein the people are truly the mainspring is that they are never to be despaired of. When an evil becomes so glaring as to strike them generally, they arouse themselves, and it is redressed.... I doubt still whether in this moment they will enlarge those powers in Congress which are necessary to keep the peace among the States. I think it possible that this may be suffered to lie till some two States commit hostilities on each other, but in that moment the hand of the union will be lifted up and interposed, and the people will themselves demand a general concession to Congress of means to prevent similar mischiefs." (2).

1. Franklin, B. - Works. Vol.10. p. 113.
2. Letters to and from Dr. Price. p. 67.



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1. Franklin, E. - Works, Vol. 10, p. 113.  
2. Letters to and from Dr. Price, p. 57.



## CHAPTER VI

In this period after the war, discussions of government again came into vogue, both in England and France. At the close of his tract entitled "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World," Dr. Price added, a letter which had been addressed to him in 1778 by Turgot(1)"Among many strictures upon the civil institutions of America he unequivocally and roundly condemns the whole theory of government, (dealt with).... Viewing it from a French position in which the centralization of power has under every change of form, even the most republican, been the leading idea, he attacks the state constitutions as slavishly borrowed from the mother country, and advocates the collecting of all authority in one centre as the only true substitute." (2). In answer to this letter, Mirabeau published a pamphlet (3) reviewing the positions of Turgot and Price respectively and strongly upheld the views of the former as to a "simple and central government." John Adams then took up the cudgels in behalf of Dr. Price with his work on the "Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America," (4), wherein he argues on behalf of the form of government which the U. S. had adopted. (5).

The following is a letter from Price to Adams concerning Adam's treatise.

1. Letter from Turgot is translated into English in the edition of 1784. Date of letter is March 22, 1778.
2. Works of John Adams. Vol.4.p.273.(Preface to the "Defence")
3. "Reflections on the Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution." Edition of 1786 - translated into English.
4. Works of John Adams. Vol.4,5,6.
5. Dr. Franklin belonged to the school of Turgot and Mirabeau. Works of John Adams. Vol.4, p. 273.



# CHAPTER VI

In this period after the war, discussions of government again came into vogue, both in England and France. At the close of his first entitled "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World," Dr. Price added a letter which had been addressed to him in 1778 by Turgot. Among many strictures upon the civil institutions of America he unapologetically and roundly condemns the whole theory of government (dealt with).... Viewing it from a French position in which the centralization of power has under every change of form, even the most republican, been the leading idea, he attacks the state constitutions as slavishly borrowed from the mother country, and advocates the collecting of all authority in one centre as the only true substitute." (3). In answer to this letter, Mirabeau published a pamphlet (3) reviewing the positions of Turgot and Price respectively and strongly upheld the views of the former as to a "single and central government." John Adams then took up the cudgels in behalf of Dr. Price with his work on the "Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America," (4), wherein he argues on behalf of the form of government which the U. S. had adopted. (5).

The following is a letter from Price to Adams concerning

Adams's treatise.

1. Letter from Turgot is translated into English in the edition of 1784. Date of letter is March 22, 1778.
2. Works of John Adams, Vol. 4, p. 273 (Preface to the "Defence").
3. "Reflections on the Constitution on the Importance of the American Revolution." Edition of 1788 - translated into English.
4. Works of John Adams, Vol. 4, p. 273.
5. Dr. Franklin belonged to the school of Turgot and Mirabeau. Works of John Adams, Vol. 4, p. 273.



"I cannot be sorry that I have given occasion for your book by the publication of M. Turgot's letter. At the time of this publication I was entirely ignorant that you had delivered any opinion with respect to the sentiment in the passage to which you have objected. I have lately written several letters to America and in some of them I have taken occasion to mention your publication and to say that you have convinced me of the main point which it is intended to prove.... The subject of civil government, next to religion is of the highest importance to mankind. It is now, I believe, better understood than ever it was. Your book will furnish a help towards further improvement and your country will, I hope, give such an example of this improvement as will be useful to the world." (1).

Among John Adam's papers we also find two letters to Dr. Price on the subject of Adam's book.

April 8, 1785.

"I think it may be said in praise of the citizens of the United States, that they are sincere inquirers after truth in matters of government and commerce; at least that there are among them as many in proportion, of this liberal character, as any other country possesses. They cannot, therefore, but be obliged to you and any other writers capable of throwing light upon these objects, who will take the pains to give them advice.

I am happy to find myself perfectly agreed with you, that we should begin by setting conscience free. When all men of all religions consistent with morals and property, shall enjoy equal liberty, property or rather security of property, and an equal chance for honors and power, and when government shall be considered as having



I am not at all sure that I have been successful in this

business, but I have been very busy at the time of this

last year, and I have been very busy at the time of this

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in it nothing more mysterious or divine than other arts or sciences we may expect that improvements will be made in the human character and the state of society." (1).

John Adams to Richard Price.

New York, 20 May 1789.

"There are few portions of my life that I recollect with more entire satisfaction than the hours I spent at Hackney, under your ministry, and in private society, and conversation with you at other places. The approbation you are pleased to express of my speculation on the subject of government is peculiarly agreeable to me because it goes a great way to convince me that the end I had in view has been in some degree answered and will be more so.... It appeared to me that my countrymen were running wild, and into danger from a too ardent and inconsiderate pursuit of erroneous opinions of government.... Our new constitution is formed in part upon its principles (those laid down by Adams in his book), and the enlightened part of our communities are generally convinced of the necessity of adopting it by degrees more completely." (2).

## CHAPTER VII

Turning from these discussions of government we notice that in a different field of politics Price was actively engaged. In 1786 Pitt's financial plans turned Price's thoughts again to his pet idea of the Sinking Fund. Pitt was planning to begin redeeming the National Debt by means of a Sinking Fund. He submitted his plan to Price for approval in the following letter which illustrates how

1. Works of J. Adams. Vol.8. p.232.
2. Works of J. Adams. Vol.9. pp.558-559.



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we may expect that improvements will be made in the human character  
and the state of society." (1)

John Adams to Richard Price

New York, 30 May 1789

"There are few portions of my life that I recollect with more  
entire satisfaction than the hours I spent at Hackney, under your  
ministry, and in private society, and conversation with you at  
other places. The opportunity you are pleased to express of my  
association on the subject of government is peculiarly agreeable  
to me because it goes a great way to convince me that the end I had  
in view has been in some degree answered and will be more so....  
It appeared to me that my countrymen were running wild, and into  
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high Dr. Price's reputation as a financier was:-

"Dear Sir:

The subject of the papers which I inclose will, I am sure, be an apology for the liberty I take in troubling you, and in requesting your opinion upon them. When you have had sufficient leisure to consider them I should be greatly obliged to you if you will allow me to hope for the pleasure of seeing you at any time that is convenient to you. The situation of the revenue certainly makes this the time to establish an effectual sinking fund. The general idea of converting the three-per cents into a fund bearing a higher rate of interest, with a view to facilitate redemption, you have on many occasions suggested, and particularly in the papers you were so good to send me last year. The rise of Stocks has made a material change since that period, and I am inclined to think something like the plan I now send you may be more adapted to the present circumstances. There may be, I believe, some inaccuracies in the calculations but not such as to be very material. Before I form any decisive opinion I wish to learn your sentiments upon it and shall think myself obliged to you for any improvement you can suggest, if you think the principle a right one or for any other proposal which from your knowledge of the subject you may think preferable!(1).

Dr. Price did not approve of Pitt's plan at all, and sent three other plans to Pitt for him to examine. One of these plans he especially advocated but since it required an addition of 800,000 pounds a year to the existing taxes, Pitt adopted one of the other plans.



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## CHAPTER VIII

In 1786 Mrs. Price died. Her death and his own failing health induced a period of dejection and despondency in Dr. Price's life, but his interest in the affairs of France soon roused him. At the Old Jewry Church (November 4, 1789), at the annual meeting of the Revolution Society, which met to commemorate the anniversary of the Revolution of 1688, Dr. Price preached his famous sermon "On the Love of Our Country" (1). He names three great blessings which he considered should be the object of all patriotic zeal: knowledge virtue, and liberty. He condemned all offensive wars declaring that only defensive wars were just. Since it was a sermon on the occasion of the anniversary of the Revolution, he gave a list of what he considered were the principles of the Revolution.

"First: the right to liberty of conscience in religious matters.

Secondly: the right to resist power when abused, and

Thirdly: the right to chuse our own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for ourselves.... Were not, I say, all this true, the Revolution would have been not an Assertion, but an Invasion of rights; not a Revolution, but a Rebellion." (2). He finds that there were two faults in the constitution which the Revolution failed to eradicate, such acts as

1. This sermon proved "to be the red rag that drew Burke into the arena, and was the immediate cause of the production of the most powerful apology for conservatism that has been ever writted, the "Reflections on the French Revolution." It is, therefore, not too much to say that, considered in the light of its effects, whether transient or permanent, no more remarkable sermon was ever delivered from a pulpit." Kent - "English Radicals" p. 82.

2. Price, R. - On the Love of Our Country. pp. 34-35.



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First: the right to liberty of conscience in religious matters.

Secondly: the right to resist power when abused, and

Thirdly: the right to choose our own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for ourselves.... Were not, I say, all this true, the Revolution would have been not an Association, but an Insurrection of rights; not a Revolution, but a Rebellion." (2). He finds that there were two faults in the constitution which the Revolution failed to eradicate, such as

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S. Price, R. - On the Love of Our Country. pp. 24-25.



the Test Acts, and the inequality of representation. Then at the end of his discourse he burst forth in praise of the French Revolution. "What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; and I could almost say, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge which has undermined superstition and error - I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever, and the nations panting for liberty, which seemed to have lost the idea of it. - I have lived to see Thirty Millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice, their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. - After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious." (1).

At the meeting in London Tavern of the Revolution Society on the same day as this discourse was delivered, at the motion of Dr. Price, a congratulatory address was written to the National Assembly of France. (2). This was transmitted by the chairman, Lord Stanhope, to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld to be presented by him to the Assembly.

Of the three great statesmen then living, Fox heartily approved of the events in France. Pitt and Burke regarded with disfavor, the destruction of the old institutions. Pitt, however, thought it wasn't his business to denounce France, and he hoped that the internal troubles of France would so weaken the country that peace would ensue for a long time between England and France.

Burke, however, was stirred to great wrath by Dr. Price and

1. Price, R. - On the Love of Our Country. p. 49.

2. Price, R. - On the Love of Our Country. Appendix p. 13.



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the doings of the Revolution Society. His "Reflections on the French Revolution" was an answer to Dr. Price's sermon "On the Love of Our Country." Burke held up Price, Priestley and their friends "to the public odium as sophisters, economists, and calculators who had destroyed the age of chivalry." (1). In his Reflections he writes, "These gentlemen of the Old Jewry, in all their reasonings on the Revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before and the late French Revolution, so much before their eyes and in their hearts that they are constantly confounding all three together. It is necessary that we should separate what they confound. We must recall their erring fancies to the acts of the Revolution which we revere, for the discovery of its true principles. If the principles of the Revolution of 1688 are anywhere to be found it is in the statute called the Declaration of Right. In that most wise, sober and considerate declaration, drawn up by great lawyers and great statesmen and not by warm and inexperienced enthusiasts, not one word is said, nor one suggestion made, of a general right 'to choose our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to form a government for ourselves.'" (2). Burke denounced Price and Priestley as "political theologians", and reminded them "that no sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian Charity. (Parliamentary History. 2nd. March 1790). (3).

As a result of these attacks by Burke, Walpole wrote "Dr. Price who had whetted his ancient talons last year to no purpose, has had them all drawn by Burke, and the Revolution Club is as much exploded

1. Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund - Life of Wm. Earl of Shelburne. Vol.3. p. 499.
2. Burke - Reflections on French Revolution. pp. 5-6.
3. Fitzmaurice - Life of Earl of Shelburne. Vol.3. p. 499.



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As a result of these attacks by Burke, Walpole wrote "Dr. Price who had wasted his ancient talents last year to no purpose, has now been all drawn by Burke, and the Revolution Club is as much excited

J. Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund - Life of Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Vol. 2, p. 488.  
B. Burke - Reflections on French Revolution, pp. 8-9.  
J. Fitzmaurice - Life of Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Vol. 2, p. 488.



as the Cock-Lane Ghost." (1). And again, "all the blessed liberty the French seem to have gained is that every man or woman, if poissardes are women, may hang whom they please. Dr. Price adopting such freedom, opened the nation's eyes." (2). Dr. Johnson also disapproved highly of Price's stand and refused to meet him. (3).

Dr. Priestley answered Burke in a pamphlet and a war of words raged fiercely in the pulpits of England in both non-conformist and established churches. All this resulted in the riots in Birmingham on July 14, 1791, in which Priestley's chapel and house were burned.

Dr. Price in the preface to the fourth edition of his "Discourse on the Love of Our Country" writes as follows about the furor which his sermon had caused:-

"Since the former Editions of the following Discourse, many animadversions upon it have been published. Under the abuse with which some of them are accompanied I have been comforted by finding myself joined to the City of Paris and the National Assembly of France. I cannot think of employing my time in making any replies. Knowing that it has been the labour of my life to promote those interests of liberty, peace and virtue which I reckon the best interests of mankind, and believing that I have not laboured quite in vain, I feel a satisfaction that no opposition can take from me, and shall submit myself in silence to the judgment of the Public, without taking any other notice of the abuse I have met with, than by mentioning the following instance of it.

"In page 49 I have adopted the words of Scripture, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace', and expressed my gratitude to

1. Walpole - Letters. Vol.9. p. 264.
2. Walpole - Letters. Vol.9. p. 269.
3. Boswell - Johnson. Note p. 336.







God for having spared my life to see a 'diffusion of knowledge that has undermined superstition and error, a vast kingdom spurning at slavery, and an arbitrary monarch, led in triumph and surrendering himself to his subjects.' These words have occasioned a comparison of me (by Mr. Burke, in his Reflections on the Revolution in France) to Hugh Peters, attended with an intimation that, like him, I 'may not die in peace', and he has described me .... as a barbarian delighted with blood, profaning Scripture, and exulting in the riot and slaughter of Versaille on the 6th. of October last year. I hope I shall be credited when, in answer to this horrid misrepresentation and menace, I assure the Public that the events to which I referred in these words were not those of the 6th. of October, but those only of the 14th. of July and the subsequent days, when after the conquest of the Bastile, the King of France sought the protection of the National Assembly, and by his own desire, was conducted, amidst acclamations never before heard in France, to Paris there to shew himself to his people as the restorer of their liberty. I am indeed surprized that Mr. Burke could want candour so much as to suppose that I had any other events in view. The letters quoted by him .... were dated July 1789, and might have shown him that he was injuring both me and the writer of those letters." (1,2.).

1. Preface to "Discourse on Love of Our Country". Fourth edition. pp. III - VI.
2. John Adams heartily approved of this sermon. He wrote on April 19, 1790 - " I love the zeal and the spirit which dictated this discourse and admire the general sentiments of it. From the year 1760 to this hour, the whole scope of my life has been to support such sentiments." "Works". Vol. 9. p. 563.







## CHAPTER IX

Price happily did not live to be disillusioned by the darker side of the French Revolution. He died April 19, 1791. His fame as a political writer rests mainly up on his pamphlet on "Civil Liberty, etc." and upon his sermon "On the Love of Our Country." (1). Trevelyan calls him one of "the best informed and most sober minded political economists of the age." (2). Kent in his "English Radicals" places him among the most important early radical thinkers and philosophers - grouping him with John Cartwright, John Jebb and Joseph Priestley. (3). Kent also says of him; "considered as philosophy, his political writings cannot rightly be called profound, but they are enough to justify the title - which Cartwright conferred upon him - of the 'Apostle of Liberty.' " (4). It is as an "Apostle of Liberty" I think, that Dr. Price should be remembered. His moral philosophy to which he first devoted his efforts centered upon the doctrine of free will and freedom of conscience. This doctrine we also find as the basis of his political beliefs. According to his ideas the only type of empire consistent with the principles of civil liberty "was that in which the component communities were free and mutually independent. His ideal was clearly a voluntary, cooperative alliance of self governing states coordinate with one another under a single head." (5). It is interesting to note that after all these years the ideal of Dr. Price now exists in the

1. Kent - "English Radicals". p. 81.
2. Trevelyan - "George III and C.J. Fox". p. 244.
3. Kent - "English Radicals". p. 67.
4. Kent - "English Radicals". p. 82.
5. Schuyler - Rise of Anti-Imperialism. Political Science Quarterly. XXXVII. p. 458.



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1. Kent - "English Radicals", p. 61.
2. Travels - "George III and the French", p. 244.
3. Kent - "English Radicals", p. 87.
4. Kent - "English Radicals", p. 88.
5. Schuyler - "Rise of Anti-Imperialism, Political Science Quarterly, XLV, p. 428.



British Commonwealth of Nations. The relationships between England and Canada, England and Australia, etc. are just what Price wished to see in existence in 1776. Most of his theories, so radical then, have now become accepted. We should remember him as one of the first Englishmen who worked for "Liberty" in religion and in politics.

#### APPENDIX I

Some interesting letters - sent to Dr.  
Price - (some) about the Colonies.  
Illustrating the kind of information  
which is received regarding the state  
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of the first Englishmen who worked for "Liberty" in religion  
and in politics.



Franklin to R. Price.

Orange Street, Sept. 28, 1772.

Mr. John (Pringle - eminent London Physician and 1772-1776  
president of Royal Society) has asked me if I knew where he could  
go to hear a preacher of rational Christianity. I told him I  
knew of several of them but did not know where their churches  
were in town. Out of town I mentioned to many friends and offered  
to go with him. He agreed to take him to go to

APPENDIX I

With sincere wishes for your health and welfare, I am ever,  
my dear Friend,

Some Interesting Letters - sent to Dr.

Price - (some) about the Colonies.

Illustrating the kind of information  
which he received regarding the state  
of affairs in North America.

I have received, for which I return you my hearty thanks, I am  
myself a capable judge of performance of this kind, not having  
an occasion to turn up to me upon such subjects; I can, however,  
not obviously discern in that work the marks of a very superior  
man.

"The attention of political affairs in this Province, par-  
ticularly, is very unhappy. In addition to our other grievances  
the Governor and the Judges of our highest Court are both  
entirely independent of the people here, and so dependent on ad-  
ministration as to be in the hands of the British and not of the  
people. It will be pleasing to those who are endeavoring to better  
the condition of the Colonies to know that the Government are  
not that the money, by which these officers in the government are



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Some interesting letters - sent to Dr.  
Price - (some) about the Colossus.  
Illustrating the kind of information  
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Franklin to R. Price.

Craven Street, Sept. 28, 1772.

"Sir John (Pringle - eminent London Physician and 1772-1778 president of Royal Society) has asked me if I knew where he could go to hear a preacher of rational Christianity. I told him I knew of several of them but did not know where their churches were in town. Out of town I mention'd yours at Newgate and offered to go with him. He agreed....

With sincere wishes for your health and welfare, I am ever,  
my dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately,  
B. Franklin.

Charles Chauncy to R. Price.

Bost. Octr. 5th, 1772.

"Rev'd and Dear Sir - Yours with your beok on "Annuities" etc. I have received, for which I return you my hearty thanks, I am not myself a capable judge of performances of this kind, not having had occasion to turn my thôts upon such subjects; I can, however, most obviously discern in that work the marks of a very superior pen....

"The situation of political affairs in this Province, particularly, is very unhappy. In addition to our other grievances our Governor and the Judges of our highest executive Court are made wholly independent of the people here, and so dependant on administration at home that we can expect no other conduct in them but what will be pleasing to those who are endeavoring to fasten on us the chains of slavery: and what aggravates our unhappiness is, that the money, by which these officers in the government are



Franklin to R. Price

Seven Street, Sept. 28, 1973

Dear Sir (Pringle - eminent London Physician and 1773-1775  
 President of Royal Society) has asked me if I know where he could  
 go to hear a preacher of Rational Christianity. I told him I  
 knew of several of them but did not know where their churches  
 were in town. Out of town I mentioned yours at Newgate and offered  
 to go with him. He agreed....

With sincere wishes for your health and welfare, I am ever,

My dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately,  
 E. Franklin

Charles Chesney to R. Price

Sept. 28, 1773

"Rev'd and Dear Sir - Yours with your book on 'Annals' etc.

I have received, for which I return you my hearty thanks, I am  
 not myself a capable judge of performances of this kind, not having  
 had occasion to turn my thoughts upon such subjects; I can, however,  
 most sensibly discern in that work the marks of a very superior

pen....

"The situation of political affairs in this Province, par-  
 ticularly, is very unhappy. In addition to our other grievances  
 our Governor and the Judges of our highest executive Court are made  
 wholly independent of the people here, and so dependent on ad-  
 ministration at home that we can expect no other conduct in them  
 but what will be pleasing to those who are endeavoring to lessen  
 on the rights of citizens; and what aggravates our miseries  
 is, that the money, by which these officers in the government are



tempted to be tools to carry into execution the arbitrary designs of those who hate us, is unconstitutionally taken out of our pockets and wickedly made use of to annihilate our privileges by charters and rights as Englishmen. What may be the effect of having an absolute despot for our Governor and Judges under a strong bias in favor of the measures of those who, with our money wrongfully taken from us, pay them for their judgments, time only will discover. People here of all sorts are greatly uneasy, loud complaints are uttered, both in the public prints and in private conversation, the ministry at home are abhorred and so are those who have the chief management of our political affairs here. The alternative now seems to be a submission to slavery or an exertion of ourselves to be delivered from it. Which of these will take place and in what way and manner, I know not - my great support is, that half a century will so increase our number and strength as to put it in the power of New England only to tell any tyrants in Great Britain in plain English that will be a free people in opposition to all they can do to prevent it." (1).

Charles Chauncy to Dr. Price.

Boston, May30th. 1774.

"The late act of Parliament, shutting up the port of Boston, and putting it out of the power of thousands of poor innocents to preserve themselves from starving, is so palpably cruel, barbarous, and inhumane, that even those who are called the friends of Government, complain bitterly of it. Nor do I know of any whose eyes are not opened to see plainly that despotism which must end in slavery is the plan to be carried into execution. This British



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of those who hate us, is unconstitutionally taken out of our  
pockets and wickedly made use of to annihilate our privileges by  
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an absolute despot for our Governor and Judges under a strong  
bias in favor of the measures of those who, with our money wrong-  
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and in what way and manner, I know not - my great support is, that  
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it in the power of New England only to tell any tyrant in Great  
Britain in plain English that will be a free people in opposition  
to all they can do to prevent it." (1).

Charles Chesnut to Dr. Price.

Boston, May 30th. 1774.

"The late act of Parliament, shutting up the port of Boston,  
and putting it out of the power of thousands of poor innocents to  
preserve themselves from starving, is so palpably cruel, barbarous,  
and infamous, that even those who are called the friends of Govern-  
ment, complain bitterly of it. Nor do I know of any whose eyes  
are not opened to see plainly that despotism which must end in  
slavery is the plan to be carried into execution. This British



edict, which, without all doubt, was an intended blow at the liberties of all the American Colonies, will, I believe, under the blessing of Providence, be the very thing which will bring salvation to us.... I have reason to think the effect of this barbarous Port act will be an agreement among the freeholders and yeomanry of all the Colonies not to purchase of the merchants any goods from England unless some few excepted ones, till we are put into the enjoyment of our constitutional rights and privileges. The plain truth is, we can in America live within ourselves, and it would be much for our interest not to import a great deal from England.... We need only pursue what is certainly our interest and the nation at home will suffer a thousand times more than we shall in this part of the world; and I am ready to think they will find this to be a truth from their own perceptions in a little time." (1).

Charles Chauncy to R. Price.(2).

Boston, July 18, 1774.

"-there never was such an union in the Colonies as at this day. The cause for which we in this town are suffering, they look upon as the common cause of all North America, their cause as truly as ours, thô we are the more immediate sufferers. They sympathize with us, they offer us their help, and will cheerfully join with us, as one, in such expedients as may be judged wise and proper to assist a redress of the grievances we are groaning under; nor do they satisfy themselves with mere words, but give us the highest assurance that they are in real earnest, for that they are, throughout the continent, making provision for the support of the numerous sufferers in this town which is the first object of ministerial

1. Letters to and from Richard Price. pp. 8-9.

2. Charles Chauncy was the Minister of First Church, Boston.



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 the Colonies not to purchase of the merchants any goods from England  
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 our interest not to import a great deal from England. . . . We need  
 only pursue what is certainly our interest and the nation at home  
 will suffer a thousand times more than we shall in this part of the  
 world; and I am ready to think they will find this to be a truth  
 from their own perceptions in a little time." (1).

Charles Channing to R. Price. (2).

Boston, July 18, 1778.

"There never was such a union in the Colonies as at this  
 day. The cause for which we in this town are suffering, they look  
 upon as the common cause of all North America, their cause as truly  
 as ours, tho' we are the more immediate sufferers. They sympathize  
 with us, they offer us their help, and will cheerfully join with  
 us, as one, in such expedients as may be judged wise and proper to  
 resist a rebuke of the grievances we are growing under; nor do  
 they exclude themselves with mere words, but give us the highest  
 assurance that they are in real earnest, for that they are, through-  
 out the continent, making provision for the support of the numerous  
 sufferers in this town which is the first object of ministerial

I believe to and from Richard Price, pp. 8-9.  
 2. Charles Channing was the Minister of First Church, Boston.



vengeances. Their bountiful donations from one part of the country and another are daily flowing in upon us. Waggon, loaded with grain and sheep, hundreds in a drove, are sent to us from one and another of the towns, not only in this, but the neighboring Colonies. Two hundred and fifteen teirces of rice, part of a thousand devoted to our service, are arrived at Salem from South Carolina, where thousands of pounds sterling more (as we hear) are subscribed for our support. We have authentic accounts from all the Colonies, that, in every country, in all the towns belonging to them, monies are collecting for our supply with provisions, and assurances given us that we shall not want should we be continued in our suffering state. The indignation universally excited in all sorts of persons... throughout America, by means of the Boston-port-bill, almost exceeds belief; and 'tis so heightened since the passing the two other parliamentary acts more immediately affecting the Massachusetts-Province, that the whole Continent is in readiness to exert themselves to the utmost in all reasonable ways to bring forward our deliverance. And it may be worthy of particular notice, the union of the Colonies and their intention of liberality in donations for our relief were the results of their own thôts, previous to any applications to them from this town or Province. They first wrote to us remonstrating against the treatment we had met with, and looking upon what was done to us as a specimen of what would be done to them also if not in some way or other prevented. South-Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New York, the Jersies, New Hampshire, thô un-chartered governments, exceed even the Massachusetts-Province in their resentments of what has been done against us; and in some of



verminous. Their principal business is the raising of  
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 grain and sheep, hundreds in a drove, are sent to us from one and  
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 deliverance. And it may be worthy of particular notice, the union  
 of the Colonies and their intention of liberality in donations  
 for our relief were the result of their own ideas, previous to  
 any applications to them from this town or Province. They first  
 wrote to us representing against the treatment we had met with, and  
 looking upon what was done to us as a sacrifice of what would be done  
 to them also if not in some way or other prevented. South-Carolina,  
 Virginia, Maryland, New York, the Jerseys, New Hampshire, the va-  
 chartered governments, exceed even the Massachusetts-Province in  
 their resentments of what has been done against us; and in some of



them there have been greater commotions and insurrections than any complained of in Boston, or the Province it belongs to, notwithstanding they are under a like form of government with that the Parliament in their two late acts would place us under, to the destruction of our charter rights, the purchase of much treasure and blood. There will be a Congress of all the Colonies by their deputies at Philadelphia on the first day of September next, as I suppose; that being the day which was fixed on for this purpose by the Massachusetts Assembly last month, for which reason more especially they were dissolved by the Governor. So far as I can learn, 'tis not in the intention of the Deputies going to the above mentioned Congress or of any of the people in this or the other Colonies, to contend with Great Britain. Their view is to bear with patience their treatment of us, however hard and cruel; at the same time, making it a point they will firmly and sacredly abide by, to live within themselves, and save those millions that are annually exported to England for what we can live very comfortably without having. It would be highly grievous and the last thing the Colonies would wish to be obliged to stand upon their own defence against military force should be used with them; but this should no other expedient be effectual, I believe, they certainly would do. All the Colonies desire is the full payment of their rights and privileges; and should this be granted to them Great Britain would hear of no commotions or disturbances, but that we were all united in love to the mother country, and in a concern to promote the honor and welfare of the English nation; nor would his Majesty have, in any part of his extended dominions, any subjects who would more



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 in love to the mother country, and in a concert to promote the  
 honor and welfare of the English nation; nor would his Majesty have  
 in any part of his extended dominions, any subjects who would more



readily venture their fortunes and lives in defence of his crown and the support of his government. The use of force might be hurtful both to the nation at home as well as the Colonies here; but the Colonies increase so fast that finally England must be the greatest sufferer by a contention with them. I suppose, by the additions yearly made to us from abroad with our own natural increase, we double in 15 years. But I cannot enlarge as I gladly would have done. In the greatest hurry I subscribe, with all respect,

Your friend and humble servant,  
Charles Chauncy. (1).

Charles Chauncy to Richard Price.

"Boston, Septemr. 13th, 1774.

Revd. Sir-

The bearer of this, Mr. Josiah Quincy, is a young gentleman of good powers, a sprightly genius, and a thôrow acquaintance with the constitution of the American Colonies; nor has anyone a more perfect knowledge of what has happened in this part of the world, both previous to and consequent upon the late acts of the British Parliament respecting Boston and the Massachusetts Province of which it is the metropolis. You may from him, should you desire it, be led into a clear, and full idea of the sad situation we are now in. He goes to England strongly disposed to serve his country wherein he may be able; and he will be the better able to do this, if he may by means of gentlemen of character at home have opportunity of conversing with those, either in or out of administration who may have been led into wrong sentiments of the people in Boston and the Massachusetts-Province in these troublesome times. The favor



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Colonies increase so fast that finally England must be the greatest  
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double in 15 years. But I cannot enlarge as I gladly would have  
done. In the greatest hurry I subscribe, with all respect,

Your friend and humble servant,  
Charles Channoy. (1)

Charles Channoy to Richard Price.  
"Boston, 8th Decr. 1774."

Rev. Sir-

The bearer of this, Mr. Josiah Quincy, is a young gentleman of  
good power, a politically genius, and a thorough acquaintance with the  
constitution of the American Colonies; nor has anyone a more perfect  
knowledge of what has happened in this part of the world, both  
previous to and consequent upon the late acts of the British  
Parliament respecting Boston and the Massachusetts Province of  
which it is the metropolis. You may from him, should you desire it,  
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if he say by means of gentleness of character at home have opportunity  
of conversing with those, either in or out of administration who  
may have been led into wrong sentiments of the people in Boston and  
the Massachusetts-Province in these troublesome times. The favor

I. Letters to and from Dr. Price. pp. 2-11.



I would ask of you is only this, that you would take so much notice of him as to introduce him, whether yourself, or by the help of one or another of your friends, into the company of those who may have it in their power to be serviceable to the Colonies in general and this Province in particular; as it is the first, in the view of administration, to be reduced to a state of slavery.

I could greatly enlarge upon our political affairs, but I purposely avoid it as you may have it done, viva voce, by Mr. Quincey...

I am, Revd. Sir, with all due respect,

Your friend and humble servant,  
Charles Chauncy." (1).

John Winthrop (2) to Richard Price.

"Cambridge, New Engld., Sept. 20, 1774.

....The fate of millions is now at stake. The measures pursued by administration for ten years past, evidently designed to abridge the Colonists of their liberties, one after another, were truly alarming and of the most dangerous tendency. But they appear to be trifles when compared with the acts passed in the last session of Parliament which I believe are not parallel'd in the British annals. The Act for Shutting up the Port of Boston struck everybody with astonishment; that cruel act which, by putting a stop to the trade on which the Town wholly depended, must immediately have starved or driven away almost all the inhabitants, had they not been supported by the very generous contributions of our sister Colonies, even in the farthest part of the Continent. But this act, shocking as it was, seemed to be swallowed up in another which quickly swallowed it, of more extensive and more fatal operation, - the act for

1. Letters to and from Dr. Price. pp. 11-12.
2. Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Harvard College.



I would ask of you is only this, that you would take so much notice of him as to instruct him, whether yourself, or by the help of one or another of your friends, into the company of those who may have it in their power to be serviceable to the Colonies in general and this Province in particular; as it is the first, in the view of administration, to be reduced to a state of slavery.

I could greatly enlarge upon our political affairs, but I purposely avoid it as you may have it done, vive voce, by Mr. Guiney...

I am, Revd. Sir, with all due respect,

Your friend and humble servant,  
Charles Chauncy. (1)

John Winthrop (2) to Richard Price.

"Cambridge, New England, Sept. 20, 1794.

...The fate of millions is now at stake. The measures pursued by administration for ten years past, evidently designed to bridge the Colonies of their liberties, one after another, were truly alarming and of the most dangerous tendency. But they appear to be trifles when compared with the acts passed in the last session of Parliament which I believe are not paralleled in the British annals. The

Act for shutting up the Port of Boston struck everybody with astonishment; that cruel act which, by putting a stop to the trade on which the Town wholly depended, must immediately have starved or driven away almost all the inhabitants, had they not been supported by the very generous contributions of our sister Colonies, even in the farthest part of the Continent. But this act, shocking as it was, seemed to be swallowed up in another which quickly swallowed it, of more extensive and more fatal operation, - the act for

1. Letters to and from Mr. Price, pp. 11-12.  
2. Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Harvard College.



better regulating the government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay which has, in fact, dissolved the government. It has mutilated the Charter so as to leave only an empty phantom remaining; and, by depriving the people of every privilege, has erected an absolute despotism in the Province. The Councillors who, by Charter, were to be elected annually by the General Court, (subject however, to the Governor's negative) are to be appointed by Mandamus from the King: the Judges, who before were paid by the General Court, are now made totally dependent on the Crown for their salaries as well as their commissions: all other civil officers, as Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, etc. are removable by the Governor at his sole pleasure, even without the advice or consent of this Mandamus Council: the Juries for trials, whose names were before drawn out of a box at a town-meeting, in the manner of a lottery, which effectually precluded all design or collusion, are now to be returned by the Sheriff. By this arrangement it is evident the Governor has it in his power to command what verdict he pleases in any case. To crown all, the third Act was passed, entitled for the more impartial administration of justice in this Province; but, in reality, to prevent the administration of justice. By this Act, any of the soldiers who should kill the inhabitants may, at the Governor's pleasure, be sent to any other Colony or to Great Britain for trial. The manifest design of which is, to empower the military to kill the inhabitants without danger of fear of punishment.

"The Governor insists on acting according to this new plan. The people are determined to adhere to the old one, so that we have neither legislative nor executive powers in the Province. Things are running fast into confusion and it seems as if it were designed



better regulating the Government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay which has, in fact, dissolved the Government. It has mutilated the Charter so as to leave only an empty phantom remaining; and, by depriving the people of every privilege, has erected an absolute despotism in the Province. The Councilors who, by Charter, were to be elected annually by the General Court, (subject however, to the Governor's negative) are to be appointed by Mandamus from the King: the Judges, who before were paid by the General Court, are now made totally dependent on the Crown for their salaries as well as their commissions: all other civil officers, as Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, etc. are removable by the Governor at his sole pleasure, even without the advice or consent of this Mandamus Council: the Juries for trials, whose names were before drawn out of a box at a town-meeting, in the manner of a lottery, which effectually precluded all design or collusion, are now to be returned by the Sheriff. By this arrangement it is evident the Governor has it in his power to command what verdict he pleases in any case. To crown all, the third Act was passed, entitled for the more impartial administration of Justice in this Province; but, in reality, to prevent the administration of Justice. By this Act, any of the soldiers who should kill the inhabitants may, at the Governor's pleasure, be sent to any other Colony or to Great Britain for trial. The manifest design of which is, to empower the military to kill the inhabitants without danger of fear of punishment.

"The Governor insists on acting according to this new plan. The people are determined to adhere to the old one, so that we have neither legislative nor executive powers in the Province. Things are running fast into confusion and it seems as if it were designed



to irritate the people into something which might be called rebellion. At all events, the people will never submit to the new system. Their minds are universally agitated to a degree not to be conceived by any person at a distance; and they are determined to abide all extremities, even the horrors of a civil war, rather than crouch to so wretched a state of vassallage. And these are the sentiments, not of a contemptible faction, as has been represented, nor of this Province only, but of every Colony on the continent. They all consider Boston as suffering in a common cause and themselves as deeply interested in the event. For tho' the vengeance is immediately directed against Boston and this Province, they all expect the same treatment in their turn unless they tamely submit to the exorbitant power lately claimed by Parliament over them; which they will never be brought to do. To submit to such a power would be to hold their lives, liberties and properties by the precarious tenure of the will of a British Minister. The sanction of Parliament, in their apprehension, makes no difference in the case; they know full well in what manner Parliamentary affairs are managed. Besides, they do not acknowledge the Commons of Great Britain as their Representatives. If the Ministry are resolved to push their schemes, nothing but desolation and misery is to be expected.

"I have given but a slight sketch of the present situation of affairs here, omitting many matters of great moment. Mr. Quincy, who will have the honor to wait upon you with this letter, can give you a much more distinct account than I can pretend to do by writing. He is a gentleman of the law, and eminent in his profession, and is making a voyage to England with hopes of doing







some service to his native country; and I humbly hope you will be pleased to favor him with your countenance." (1).

Earl of Shelburne to R. Price.

Bowood Park, 26 Decr., 1774.

Dear Dr. Price, .... I shall be glad to see Mr. Quincy or any friend of yours. ....

What has come from the American Congress opens a new and important field for discussion by separating regulations of trade from the consideration of a revenue, how far the riches and prosperity of a country need such regulations as we have been accustomed to see enforc'd by custom house officers, at a great expense, and occasioning great corruption. This is one I conceive of many subjects which must now be decided, however indispos'd the Ministry may be for obvious reasons. I hear from London that the American Secretary has given for answer to those that presented the petition transmitted by the Congress, that it was receiv'd very graciously, and would be laid before both Houses. This gives me pleasure so far as it indicates a change of measures. As to a change of men, I don't myself know, whether it would not be better that the present should continue. The rage for Ministry is so universal and the consideration attach'd to it so much beyond the mark, that it requires a change of ideas to take place. Nor can it be expected that any man will be for lessening a power today which tomorrow he expects to be in possession of. There is only one evil I foresee attending it, and that you'll say exists already in the minds of the people who have long since lost all confidence in their rep-



some service to his native country; and I heartily hope you will be  
pleased to favor him with your countenance." (1).

Earl of Shaftesbury to R. Price.

Bowood Park, 25 Decr., 1774.

Dear Mr. Price, .... I shall be glad to see Mr. Price at any

time of your choice.

What has come from the American Congress opens a new and  
important field for discussion by separating regulations of trade  
from the consideration of a revenue, how far the riches and pros-  
perity of a country need such regulations as we have been accustomed  
to see enforced by custom house officers, at a great expense, and  
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subjects which must now be decided, however independent the Ministry  
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requires a change of ideas to take place. Nor can it be expected  
that any man will be for lessening a power today which tomorrow he  
expects to be in possession of. There is only one evil I foresee  
attending it, and that you'll say exists already in the minds of  
the people who have long since lost all confidence in their rep-



representatives. I write to you upon my knee in the midst of the children's noise, a very unfit situation to write upon such serious subjects. In every situation and in every temper, believe me, however,

Yrs. and Mrs. Price's affectionate friend and servant,  
Shelburne." (1).

Earl of Shelburne to R. Price.

(Jan. 1775?).

"I am myself so confident, from reading over and over the petition in question, from twelve years intimate connection with America, and as attentive an observation of their public acts and their character, that I would willingly risque my head on their proving themselves, upon these terms, what they say of themselves, not only faithfull subjects but faithfull Colonists to the parent state. (2). Very extensive words which in able hands admit of everything we could desire. .... The times are dark, and in my idea, the most that can be done is to prevent bad opinions being lodg'd with the publick, a fresh injustice being done to the principles and intentions of our American brethren.

As to ourselves you may depend upon my never losing sight of what you know I consider as our political salvation, and that all my aim finally terminates there." (3).

Yrs ever,  
Shelburne.

Charles Chauncy to R. Price.

"Boston, Jany. 10th, 1775.

..... What came into event here before the 26th. of Sepr., when Mr.

1. Letters to and from R. Price. pp. 14-15.
2. This refers to an address to the King adopted by the Continental Congress, Oct. 26, 1774.
3. Letters to and from R. Price. pp. 15-16.



representatives. I write to you upon my knee in the midst of the children's noise, a very unfit situation to write upon such serious subjects. In every situation and in every temper, believe me, however, Mrs. and Mrs. Price's affectionate friend and servant, "Shelburne." (1).

Earl of Shelburne to R. Price.

(Jan. 1775).

"I am myself so confident, from reading over and over the petition in question, that twelve years intimate connection with America, and as attentive an observation of their public acts and their character, that I would willingly stake my head on their proving themselves, upon these terms, what they say of themselves, not only faithful subjects but faithful Colonists to the parent state. (2). Very extensive words which in able hands admit of everything we could desire. . . . The times are dark, and in my idea, the most that can be done is to prevent bad opinions being lodged with the nation, a fresh injustice being done to the principles and intentions of our American brethren. As to ourselves you may depend upon my never losing sight of what you know I consider as our political salvation, and that all my air finally terminates there." (3).

Yrs ever,  
Shelburne.

Charles O'Hanley to R. Price.

"Boston, Jan. 10th, 1775."

..... What came into your head before the 25th of Sept., when Mr.

1. Letters to and from R. Price, pp. 14-15.
2. This refers to an address to the King adopted by the Continental Congress, Oct. 25, 1774.
3. Letters to and from R. Price, pp. 15-16.



Quincey embarked for London I shall say nothing about, as you have doubtless had opportunity of hearing from him an exact and true account of facts till that time. Since then the fortifications at the only entrance to Boston by land have, at no small expence, been completed; the troops which were at New York, New-Jersey, Philadelphia and Canada sent for and brôt to town in addition to those that were here before; making in all eleven regiments, besides several companies of the artillery. You can't easily imagine the greatness of our embarissment; especially, if it be remembered that the town, while filled with troops, is at the same time encompassed with ships of war, and the harbour so blocked up as that an entire stop is put to trade only as it carried on at the amazing charge of transporting everything from Salem, not less than 28 miles by land. Can it in reason be thôt that Americans, who were freeborn, will submit to such cruel tyranny? They will sooner lose their hearts' blood. Not fears, but the livery of the troops among us, pointing them out as subjects of the same sovereign with ourselves, is the true and only reason they were either suffered to come or to continue here without molestation. Had they been French or Spanish troops they would have been cut off long before now, as they easily might have been. It is given out by the tools of government that more ships of war and more regiments will soon be sent to humble or destroy us. The Colonists are not intimidated by such threatenings neither would they be should they be carried into execution. They are sensible that contending with Great Britain would be like a mouse's contending with a lyon, could her ships of war sail upon the land as they do upon the water. But in a contest with America



Quincy expressed for London I shall say nothing about, as you have  
 doubtless had opportunity of hearing from him an exact and true  
 account of those till that time. Since then the fortifications at  
 the only entrance to Boston by land have, at no small expense, been  
 completed; and troops which were at New York, New-Jersey, Philadelphia  
 and Canada sent for and brought to town in addition to those that were  
 here before; making in all eleven regiments, besides several com-  
 panies of the artillery. You can't easily imagine the greatness of  
 our embarrassment; especially, if it be remembered that the town,  
 while filled with troops, is at the same time encompassed with  
 siege of war, and the harbor so blocked up as that an entire stop  
 is put to trade only as it carried on at the amazing charge of  
 transporting everything from Salem, not less than 25 miles by land.  
 Can it in reason be thought that Americans, who were freeborn, will  
 submit to such cruel tyranny? They will sooner lose their hearts'  
 blood. Not that, but the livery of the troops among us, pointing  
 them out as subjects of the same sovereign with ourselves, is the  
 true and only reason they were either suffered to come or to con-  
 tinue here without restriction. Had they been French or Spanish  
 troops they would have been sent off long before now, as they easily  
 might have been. It is given out by the tools of government that  
 were ships of war and more regiments will soon be sent to humble  
 or destroy us. The Colonists are not intimidated by such threatenings  
 neither would they be carried into execution. They  
 are sensible that contending with Great Britain would be like a  
 course's contending with a lion, could her ships of war sail upon  
 the land as they do upon the water. But in a contest with America



her ships can annoy none of our inland towns, and but a few only of our towns upon the sea-coast for want of depth of water. And should they even destroy these, England would suffer more than America, as a greater debt than the worth of all these places would, by that means, be at once cancelled.

"The people in England have been taught to believe that five or six thousand regular troops would be sufficient to humble us into the lowest submission to any parliamentary acts however tyrannical. But we are not so ignorant in military affairs and unskilled in the use of arms as they take us to be. A spirit for martial skill has strangely caught from one to another throughout at least the New-England Colonies. A number of companies, in many of our towns, are already able to go thro' the military exercise in all its forms with more dexterity and a better grace than some of the regiments which have been sent to us; and even all our men from 20 to 60 years of age are either formed or forming into companies and regiments under officers of their own choosing, to be steadily tutored in the military art. It is not doubted but by next spring we shall have at least one hundred thousand men well qualified to come forth for the defence of our liberties and rights, should there be a call for it. We have besides in the New-England Colonies only a much greater number of men who, the last war, were made regulars by their services than your troops now in Boston. I can't help observing to you here that we have in this town a company of boys, from about 10 to 14 years of age, consisting of 40 or 50, who, in the opinion of the best judges, can go through the whole military exercise much more dexterously than a very great part of the regulars have been able to do since they have been here.



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"I would not suggest by anything I have said, that we have the least disposition to contend with the parent states. 'Tis our earnest universal desire to be at peace and to live in love and harmony with all our fellow subjects. We shall not betake ourselves to the sword, unless necessarily obliged to it in self defence; but in that case, so far as I can judge, 'tis the determination of all North America to exert ourselves to the utmost, be the consequence what it may. They chuse death rather (than) to live in slavery, as they must do, if they submit to that despotic government which has been contrived for them.

"The accounts I have seen in some of the London newspapers, affirming that Governour Gage and Lord Piercy have been killed, and that a number of houses have been pulled down, are without the least foundation in truth, and must be numbered among the many abominable falsehoods which are continually transmitting home by those detestable inhabitants here to whose lies it is owing that we have been brôt into our present distressing circumstances.

"The result of the Continental Congress I should have sent you, but that it has probably reached home by this time, or doubtless will long before a copy of it would was it to go by this opportunity. I cannot but look upon it an occurrence in our favor truly extraordinary, that so many Colonies, so distant from one another and having each their separate interest, should unite in sending delegates to meet in one general body upon the present occasion, and that those delegates (52, I think) should, upon a free and full debate among themselves, be so united in what they have done. I have been assured by our Massachusetts delegates, since their return from Philadelphia, that there was in no article more than one or two



"I would not suggest by anything I have said, that we have the least disposition to contend with the present state. The only universal desire to be at peace and to live in love and harmony with all our fellow subjects. We shall not betake ourselves to the sword, unless necessarily obliged to it in self defence; but in that case, so far as I can judge, 'tis the determination of all North America to exert ourselves to the utmost, to the consequences what it may. They choose death rather (than) to live in slavery, as they must do, if they submit to that despotic government which has been contrived for them.

"The accounts I have seen in some of the London newspapers, attesting that Governor Ogle and Lord Pitcairn have been killed, and that a number of houses have been pulled down, are without the least foundation in truth, and must be numbered among the many accountable falsehoods which are continually transmitting home by those detestable inhabitants here to whose lies it is owing that we have been brought into our present distressing circumstances.

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dissentients, and in almost every one perfect unanimity. And 'tis as extraordinary that the doings of the Congress should be so universally adopted as a rule of conduct strictly to be adhered to. Effectual care has been taken in all the Colonies, counties, and towns that the non-consumption agreement, in special, be punctually complied with and committees of inspection are constituted to see that this is done and their care upon this head has been the more earnest as they are universally sensible that no non-importation agreement among merchants will signify anything unless they are obliged to keep to it by not being able to sell their goods should they send for them. You may receive it as a certain fact, that, in conformity to one of the articles agreed to by the continental congress, all the merchandise that has arrived from Great Britain since the 1st of December has been sold, or is now selling at vendue, and whatever it fetches beyond the prime cost and charges is to relieve Boston sufferers under their present distresses; and it may be depended on, that whatever goods come after the 1st of February will be sent back without being opened. You can't easily conceive the universality and zeal of all sorts of persons in all the Colonies to carry fully into effect whatever the Congress have recommended in order to put an entire stop to our commerce with England, till the acts we complain of are repealed.

"Those who call themselves the friends of Government, but are its greatest enemies, are continually endeavouring, in all the ways they can devise to foment divisions among the people, and to lead them, in particular, into an ill opinion of the result of the grand Congress; but they labor in vain. It is the opinion of some here



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that there are among us those who are employed upon the hire of unrighteousness to do all that lies in their power to effect a submission to the late acts which would enslave us; but whether this be so, or not, you may rely on it as the truth of fact that, notwithstanding all their efforts, the inhabitants of these Colonies one it may be in an hundred excepted, are firmly united in their resolution to defend themselves against any force which may be used with them to deprive them of the rights they have a just claim to, not only as men made of one blood with the rest of the human species, but as Englishmen, and Englishmen born heirs to a royal grant of Charter rights and privileges.

"We are told (perhaps to affrighten us) by those who join with the ministry in carrying their plan of despotism into effect, that every port on the continent will be blocked up next spring by English ships of war. But this we know cannot be done, as the sea-coast on this continent is of such large extent that we have so great a number of harbours, rivers and inlets, inaccessible by any ships of war so as to do us harm. Besides, administration, by such conduct as this, would in the most effectual manner cooperate with the American Congress in putting a stop to all commerce with Great Britain, which would, perhaps, be more hurtful to you than to us, for we should, notwithstanding, have all the necessaries and most of the comforts of life, and be far more happy than we could be were we to be enslaved.

"I can't help assuring you as an evidence that the Colonies continue united in supporting the common cause that they are almost daily sending to this town for its relief, flower, indian corn, beef, pork, mutton, butter, cheese, and in a word everything necessary



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for the comfort as well as support of life; and we have all the encouragement we can desire to depend upon their going on to do thus while our circumstances are such as to require their help.

"I fear I have tired your patience; but I must, notwithstanding, add this further that a most malignant fever rages among the troops. Three, four, and five have sometimes been buried in a day. Many of them are now sick. There is no abatement of the disease. Blessed be God, few or none of the town-people have taken the infection. The troops, by desertion and death, are amazingly lessened, which we certainly know, notwithstanding the care of the officers to hide it from us.

Your friend (and) humble servant,  
Charles Chauncy." (1).

Other letters covering the period from 1774-1790, which gave Dr. Price first hand information concerning American affairs, are from Ezra Stiles, Edward Wigglesworth, John Winthrop, Charles Chauncy, William Gordon, Arthur Lee, William Hazlitt, John Wheelock, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Jonathan Jackson, John Lathrop, Joseph Willard, James Bowdoin, Benjamin Rush, John Clarke, James Sullivan, Samuel Vaughan, William Bingham, John Adams, William White, - all prominent men in the Colonies. Even though many of Dr. Price's papers have not been preserved, enough remain to indicate that he had enough correspondence with Americans to have plenty of first hand information about the state of affairs in the Colonies. (2).

1. Letters to and from R. Price. pp. 16-19.
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A Short Summary of the Life and Activities of Dr. Price during his Early Life and up until he published his Views on America.

On February 23, 1732, at Tynan in the parish of Langham in the county of Glamorgan, was born Richard Price, the son of Isaac Price, a minister of a congregation of dissenters, and a highly educated man. Until he was about ten years old the boy was educated partly at home and partly by a Mr. Peters. Although his father intended him for trade, he saw that he got a good education. After his studies with Mr. Peters for a while at a small school in Bridgend, and from there to another school at Heath kept by the Rev. Mr. Simmons, a dissenting minister. The year after he was taken out of school and sent to the Rev. Samuel Jones at Pantyffynon in Glamorgan. He was there for a year, partly because of Mr. Jones's illness and partly because of expense, his father removed him from Pantyffynon and entered him in the Rev. Thomas Griffiths's academy at Talgarth in Breconshire. Here he remained until his father's death in 1738. Since Richard had displayed his natural talents and by the liberality of his religious views, which he showed in the early years of education, his father left his property all to another son. However Richard was able to stay at Talgarth for two more years. Then his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, who acted as co-pastor with Dr. Isaac Watts, made it possible for him to go to London to the dissenting academy founded by a Mr. Gower. Here he completed his academy course under Mr. Evans, the head tutor.

APPENDIX II

A Short Summary of the Life of Dr. Price before 1776, (including a summary of "An Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt.")

After his graduation from this school his uncle secured him a



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A Short Summary of the Life of Dr. Price  
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A Short Summary of the Life and Activities of Dr. Price during his Early Life and up until he Published his Views on America.

On February 23, 1723, at Tynton in the parish of Langeinor in the county of Glamorgan, was born Richard Price, the son of Rice Price, a minister of a congregation of dissenters, and a bigoted Calvinist. Until he was about ten years old the boy was educated partly at home and partly by a Mr. Peters. Although his father intended him for trade, he saw that he got a good education. After his studies with Mr. Peters he was sent for a while to a small school in Bridgend, and from there to another school at Neath kept by the Rev. Mr. Simmons, a dissenting minister. Two years later he was taken out of this school and sent to study with the Rev. Samuel Jones at Pentwyn in Carmarthenshire. When he was fifteen, partly because of Mr. Jones's liberal ideas in religion and partly because of expense, his father removed him from Pentwyn and entered him in the Rev. Vavasor Griffiths academy at Talgarth in Breconshire. Here he remained until his father's death in 1739. Since Richard had displeased his narrow-minded parent by the liberality of his religious views, which he showed in the early years of education, his father left his property all to another son. However Richard was able to stay at Talgarth for two more years. Then his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, who acted as co-pastor with Dr. Isaac Watts, made it possible for him to go to London to the dissenting academy founded by a Mr. Coward. Here he completed his academy course under Mr. Eames, the head tutor.

After his graduation from this school his uncle secured him a



A Short Summary of the Life and Activities of Dr. Price during his Early Life and up until he finished his Views on America.

On February 23, 1783, at Tynton in the parish of Langelston in the county of Glamorgan, was born Richard Price, the son of Rice Price, a minister of a congregation of dissenters, and a pious Calvinist. Until he was about ten years old the boy was educated partly at home and partly by a Mr. Peters. Although his father intended him for trade, he saw that he got a good education. After his studies with Mr. Peters he was sent for a while to a small school in Bridgend, and from there to another school at West Kenn by the Rev. Mr. Simmons, a dissenting minister. Two years later he was taken out of this school and sent to study with the Rev. Samuel Jones at Penryn in Carmarthenshire. When he was fifteen, partly because of Mr. Jones's liberal ideas in religion and partly because of expense, his father removed him from Penryn and entered him in the Rev. Professor Griffiths academy at Talgarth in Breconshire. Here he remained until his father's death in 1788. Since Richard had displeased his narrow-minded parent by the liberality of his religious views, which he showed in the early years of education, his father left his property all to another son. However Richard was able to stay at Talgarth for two more years. Then his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, who acted as co-pastor with Dr. Isaac Watts, made it possible for him to go to London to the dissenting academy founded by a Mr. Howard. Here he completed his academy course under Mr. James, the head tutor. After his graduation from this school his uncle secured him a



position as chaplain and companion in the family of Mr. Streatfield of Stoke Newington. Price lived here for thirteen years. During that time he preached to various dissenting congregations round about, particularly at Dr. Chandler's meetinghouse in the Old Jewry, and later at Edmonton and Newington Green. In 1756 both his uncle and Mr. Streatfield died leaving him comfortable legacies. The more comfortable state of his fortunes enabled him to spend more time in the studies in which he was so interested, mathematics and philosophy, and also to marry in 1757 a Miss Sarah Blundell, the daughter of one of the unfortunate speculators ruined by the South Sea Bubble in 1720. In the same year, 1757, he published his "Review of the Principal Questions in Morals", a work which gained him a little fame and brought about his acquaintance with many philosophers and literary men, among them Franklin and Hume. This work was followed soon by a "Dissertation on Providence" and "The Junction of Virtuous Men in a Future State". Through these he made the acquaintance of Lord Shelburne who continued his friend through life. As Dr. Price's nephew writes, "The late Marquis of Lansdowne (then Earl of Shelburne) having just been deprived of his wife and feeling himself deeply afflicted by the loss of that amiable and excellent lady, naturally became susceptible of religious impressions in that season of sorrow, and disposed to receive those consolations which are derived from the hope of a better state. By the recommendation of Mrs. Montague, Lord Shelburne was induced to read the two dissertations above mentioned and was so highly gratified by the perusal of them that he immediately expressed a wish to Mrs. Montague to be introduced to the author." (1). This friendship began in 1769, before Dr. Price

1. Morgan, Wm. - Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Richard Price.  
p. 31.



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became at all interested in political subjects. It is not impossible that Lord Shelburne's interest in politics drew his friend's attention to them. At any rate about the time that Dr. Price and Lord Shelburne made each other's acquaintance, Dr. Price began to write on subjects not religious. In 1769 in a letter to Franklin he enclosed some observations on the "expectation of lives, the increase of mankind and the population of London" which were published in that year's Philosophical Transactions. (1). In 1770 he sent to the Royal Society some observations on Reversionary Payments. "The publication of these papers is said to have exercised a most beneficial influence in drawing attention to the inadequate calculations on which many insurance and benefit societies had recently been formed." (2).

Then in 1771, the first edition of his "Appeal to the Public on the subject of the National Debt" appeared. (Later editions of this were published in 1772 and 1774.) "In the treatise on Reversionary Payments Dr. Price had given an Essay on Public Credit and the National Debt, reprehending the impudent manner in which that debt had been contracted and more particularly the amount to which it had been suffered to accumulate in consequence of the alienation of the Sinking Fund." (3). This "Appeal" published in 1771 was a more formal paper about the same subject. He begins his argument by differentiating between different kinds of sinking funds." A Sinking Fund, according to the most general idea of it, signifies 'any Saving of Surplus set apart from the rest of an annual income and appropriated to the purpose of paying off or sinking debts.'

1. Dictionary of National Biography.
2. Dictionary of National Biography.
3. Morgan - Memoir of Dr. Richard Price. p. 43.



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1. Dictionary of National Biography.  
2. Dictionary of National Biography.  
3. Morgan - Memoirs of Dr. Richard Price. p. 42.



There are three ways in which a kingdom may apply such a saving.

1st. The interests disengaged from time to time by the payments made with it may be themselves applied to the payment of the public debts.

Or, 2dly, they may be spent on current services.

Or, 3dly, they may be immediately annihilated by abolishing the taxes charged with them.... A Sinking Fund, according to the first method of applying it, is, if I may be allowed the comparison, like a grain of corn sown, which, by having its produce sown and the produce of that produce and so on, is capable of an increase that will soon stock a province or support a kingdom. On the contrary, a Sinking Fund according to the second way of spending it, is like a seed the produce of which is consumed and which, therefore, can be of no farther use, and has all its power destroyed.

The former, be its income at first ever so much exceeded by the new debts incurred annually, will soon become superior to them, and cancel them. The latter, if at first inferior to the new debts incurred annually, will forever remain so; and a state that has no other provision for the payment of its debts will be always accumulating them till it sinks.

What has been now said of the second mode of applying a fund is true in a higher degree of the third. For in this case, the disengaged interests, instead of being either added to the fund, or spent from year to year on useful services, are immediately given up.

In short, a fund of the first sort is money bearing compound interest - a fund of the second sort is money bearing simple interest and a fund of the third sort is money bearing no interest." (1).

1. Price, R. - "An Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt." pp. 2-4.



There are three ways in which a Kingdom may apply such a service. The interests disappeared from time to time by the payments made with it may be themselves applied to the payment of the public debts.

Or, 2dly, they may be spent on current services. Or, 3dly, they may be immediately annihilated by abolishing the taxes charged with them. A sinking fund, according to the first method of applying it, is, if I may be allowed the comparison, like a grain of corn sown, which, by having its produce sown and the produce of that produce and so on, is capable of an increase that will soon stock a province or support a Kingdom. On the contrary, a sinking fund according to the second way of spending it, is like a seed the produce of which is consumed and which, therefore, can be of no farther use, and has all its power destroyed.

The former, be its income at first ever so much exceeded by the new debts incurred annually, will soon become superior to them, and cancel them. The latter, if at first inferior to the new debts incurred annually, will forever remain so; and a state that has no other provision for the payment of its debts will be always accumulating them till it sinks.

That has been now said of the second mode of applying a fund is true in a higher degree of the third. For in this case, the disappeared interests, instead of being either added to the fund or sent from year to year on useful services, are immediately given up. In short, a fund of the first sort is money-bearing compound interest - a fund of the second sort is money bearing simple interest and a fund of the third sort is "money bearing no interest." (1)



"It is an observation of particular importance here that there is no benefit to be derived from employing a fund in the second of the ways I have mentioned, rather than the first. In both cases, the taxes are continued during the operation of the fund and the national burdens are the same. In the former a disengaged tax is employed to pay a debt and in the latter, to save a debt which must have been otherwise incurred; and thus far the two funds are perfectly equal in their influence on the public. The difference which would appear on tracing them farther is a difference entirely in favour of the former fund, and a difference too, which is not balanced by any kind of loss or expence. A disengaged annuity, if employed to pay a debt, will obtain for the public another annuity, and that another in infinitum. Whereas, if employed to save a debt, or, which is the same, the interest of a debt, as that interest would not itself have borne interest, no farther advantage could arise. In short, in the one case the disengaged annuity is Prolific, and contains in itself a number continually growing of other annuities. In the other case it is a Barren annuity. To employ a fund therefore, in the latter way rather than in the former, is preferring an exemption from the burdens of one annuity to an exemption from many; or subjecting a kingdom to (a) loss.... only for the sake of saving a debt rather than paying an equal debt; that is, from a regard to a circumstance in itself absolutely frivolous.

In the third or last way of employing a Fund the Public will obtain some advantage by the abolition of taxes. But it is an advantage unspeakably overbalanced by disadvantages.... But I need not insist on the folly of this, the abolition of taxes being what we know little of in this country.



"It is an observation of particular importance here that there is no benefit to be derived from employing a fund in the second of the ways I have mentioned, rather than the first. In both cases, the taxes are continued during the operation of the fund and the national burdens are the same. In the former a dissipated tax is employed to pay a debt and in the latter, to save a debt which must have been otherwise incurred; and thus far the two funds are perfectly equal in their influence on the public. The difference which would appear on tracing them farther is a difference entirely in favour of the former fund, and a difference too, which is not balanced by any kind of loss or expense. A dissipated annuity, if employed to pay a debt, will obtain for the public another annuity, and that another in infinitum. Whereas, if employed to save a debt, or, which is the same, the interest of a debt, as that interest would not itself have borne interest, no further advantage could arise. In short, in the one case the dissipated annuity is profitable, and contains in itself a number continually growing of other annuities. In the other case it is a barren annuity. To employ a fund therefore, in the latter way rather than in the former, is preferring an exemption from the burden of one annuity to an exemption from many; or subjecting a kingdom to (a) loss.... only for the sake of saving a debt rather than paying an equal debt; that is, from a regard to a circumstance in itself absolutely frivolous. In the third or last way of employing a fund the public will obtain some advantage by the abolition of taxes. But it is an advantage unacceptably overbalanced by disadvantages.... But I need not insist on the folly of this, the abolition of taxes being what we know little of in this country.



It must have been observed that a Fund of the second sort is a greater check on the increase of public debts than a Fund of the third sort. But the difference is not considerable and there is one circumstance which, I think, reduces it almost to nothing. It supposes a strict and inviolable application of the perpetuated annuities to the purpose of saving equivalent debts. But such an application of them is scarcely practicable. When small, they would be neglected; and when large, they would, like the savings of persons in private life, only occasion an abatement of frugality: and, for this reason, if a Fund is not applied in the first way, it might, for ought I know, be best that it should be employed in the last way for a kingdom would then be sure of receiving some relief, whereas otherwise it might receive none." (1).

He then goes on to discuss the alienation of the Sinking Fund. To this he attributes the existing heavy debt. Suppose a certain sum is needed by the Government and the required sum is in the Sinking Fund. It will be argued that it will make no difference whether the amount is taken from the Fund or a new loan is contracted. It is easier to take the money out of the Fund and it saves the disagreeable task of levying a new tax. Therefore this method had frequently if not always been followed. But as Dr. Price points out, the fallacy of this plan is the belief that the public cannot lose in "continuing an old debt, when it cannot be discharged without incurring an equal new debt." (2). However, "when a State borrows it pays.... only simple interest for money. When it alienates a Fund appropriated to the payment of its debts, it loses the

1. Price, R. - Appeal on National Debt. pp. 7-10.

2. Price, R. - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p.11.







advantage of money that would have been otherwise improved necessarily at compound interest." (1). Thus he describes the alienation policy as "a barbarous policy .... which runs a kingdom into debt. Millions in order to save Thousands; which robs the Public of the power of annihilating all taxes in order to avoid a small present increase of taxes." (2). Such a policy must indeed have seemed barbarous to a man who firmly believed that compound interest was a worker of wonders. To prove its great efficacy he writes that "one Penny put out at our Saviour's birth at five per cent compound interest would, before this time (1771) have increased to a greater sum than would be contained in a Hundred and Fifty Millions of Earths, all solid gold," (3) while if put out at simple interest it would amount to only seven shillings and fourpence halfpenny. And again - "An annual saving of 200,000 pounds applied without interruption from the year 1700 would long before this time have discharged above eighty millions of our debts, gradually and insensibly, and without interfering with any of the other measures or resources of Government." (4).

This pamphlet brought Dr. Price a great reputation as a financier. As we shall see, its influence did much to reëstablish the Sinking Fund under Pitt. However, Price did not expect it to have any real effect on national policy, for his nephew in his (5) Memoirs tells us that Dr. Price "acted more from a sense of duty.... than from any confident hope of success" for he considered the then

1. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 13.
2. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 14.
3. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 19.
4. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 40.
5. Morgan, Wm. - Memoir of Dr. Price. p. 46.



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than would be contained in a hundred and fifty millions of dollars.  
All solid gold." (3) While it put out at this interest it would  
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This pamphlet brought Dr. Price a great reputation as a  
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1. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 15.
2. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 14.
3. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 13.
4. Price - An Appeal on the Subject of the National Debt. p. 12.
5. Watson, Wm. - Memoir of Dr. Price. p. 68.



existing debt of 140 millions a great evil which threatened Great Britain with ruin, since the past ten years of peace had done little to lighten the people's burden and since, as he believed, rapid depopulation was making the people less able to carry such a debt. Later financiers have regarded his plan as a sort of "hocus pocus", but he did the country a great service by calling attention to the growth of the debt, and he "and following him, Shelburne, had the merit also of being among the first to attack the practice begun by North and since frequently followed, of funding by increase of capital; a practice originating in the neglect of the consideration that the country when it borrows has to look forward not merely to paying a perpetual annuity, but eventually to repaying the principal of the debt." (1).

1. Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund - Life of William, Earl of Shelburne, Vol.3. p. 94.



53.  
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J. Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund - Life of William, Earl of  
Chamberlain, Vol. I, p. 94.



A quotation from a manuscript sent to Mr. Norton, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society by Mr. Walter Ashburner, descendant of Dr. Price.

"Richard Price, D.D., F.R.S., is whom or by whom the letters now published were written, was a man of varied interests. He was by profession a Unitarian Minister, but he was also an authority on questions of life assurance, and in his later years at any rate, he derived a considerable income from answering questions on subjects connected with the exigencies of life insurance. He was a voluminous writer on religion, morals, politics, and mathematics. He was a strong liberal and a warm friend (as these letters show) to the American cause. Such a man was a constant correspondent."

APPENDIX III

A Paragraph about Dr. Price,

by a Descendant, Mr. Walter Ashburner.

"Dr. Price by his will, which bears the date of 23th. of May 1793, gave his residuum in equal shares to his nephews Mr. Morgan and George Dodgson Morgan and appointed them executors. George Dodgson Morgan, also a Unitarian Minister, intended to write his uncle's life, but died in 1793 before he had carried out his plan. William Morgan, the other nephew, published in 1815 a thin volume of memoirs of the life of Dr. Price. William Morgan was a distinguished mathematician and for many years secretary of the Equitable Assurance Society of London, but he was not a good biographer, nor does he seem to have taken much care of Dr. Price's papers. It was very different with Miss Sara Travers, William Morgan's granddaughter. After her possession the remains of the Price correspondence actually came. Miss Travers was devoted to the memory of her maternal relative and of all his group of friends. She cherished



APPENDIX III

A. Photograph about Dr. Price,  
by a Descendant, Mr. Walter Ashburner.



A Quotation from a Memorandum sent to Mr. Norton, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society by Mr. Walter Ashburner, descendant of Dr. Price.

"Richard Price, D.D.F.R.S. to whom or by whom the letters now published were written, was a man of varied interests. He was by profession a Unitarian Minister, but he was also an authority on questions of life assurance, and in his later years at any rate, he derived a considerable income from answering questions on subjects connected with the expectation of life. He was a voluminous writer on religion, morals, politics, and mathematics. He was a strong liberal and a warm friend (as these letters show) to the American cause. Such a man necessarily carried on an extensive correspondence, but the greater part of it has perished.

"Dr. Price by his will, which bears the date of 25th. of May 1789, gave his residue in equal shares to his nephews Wm. Morgan and George Cadogan Morgan and appointed them executors. George Cadogan Morgan, also a Unitarian Minister, intended to write his uncle's life, but died in 1798 before he had carried out his plan. William Morgan, the other nephew, published in 1815 a thin volume of memoirs of the life of Dr. Price. William Morgan was a distinguished mathematician and for many years actuary of the Equitable Assurance Society of London, but he was not a good biographer, nor does he seem to have taken much care of Dr. Price's papers. It was very different with Miss Sara Travers, William Morgan's granddaughter, into whose possession the remains of the Price correspondence eventually came. Miss Travers was devoted to the memory of her eminent relative and of all his group of friends. She cherished



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whatever had any association with them; favored guests were offered tea out of a teapot which Dr. Franklin had given to Dr. Price....

"Miss Travers by her will left the Price papers to her cousin, Miss Caroline E. Williams of 4 Vicarage Gate, London, who is the granddaughter of a sister of William and George Cadogan Morgan and therefore a great-grandniece of Dr. Price. Miss Williams has lately given the greater part of the Price papers to her cousin, the writer of these lines, who is himself a great grandson of George Cadogan Morgan." (1).

1. "Letters to and from R. Price." pp. 3-4.



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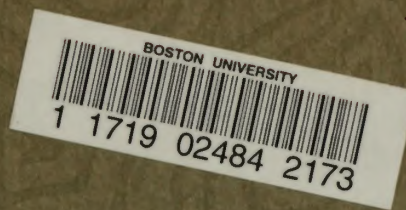
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